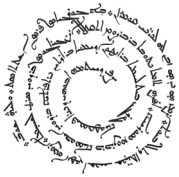
Jacob of Sarug's Homilies on the Nativity



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Jacob of Sarug's Homilies on the Nativity

Translated with Introduction by
Thomas Kollamparampil

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAA	Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles
AMS	P. Bedjan, *Acta Martyrum et Sanctorum*, I-VII (Paris/Leipzig, 1890–97)
Bedjan	(see Bibliography, under Jacob of Sarug)
CSCO	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium (Leuven)
ET	English translation
MHMJS	Metrical Homilies of Mar Jacob of Sarug (Piscataway NJ, 2008)
Nat I-III	Jacob, Homilies on the Nativity, I-III (in this volume)
OCA	Orientalia Christiana Analecta (Rome)
OLA	Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta (Leuven)
PO	Patrologia Orientalis (Turnhout)

I ON THE NATIVITY OF OUR REDEEMER ACCORDING TO THE FLESH[1]

[1] See an Italian translation of this homily by C. Vona, *Omelie Mariologiche,* pp. 195–235.

INTRODUCTION

INFORMATION ON THIS HOMILY	
Homily Title:	On the Nativity of our Redeemer according to the Flesh
Source of Text:	*Homiliae selectae Mar-Jacobi Sarugensis* edited by Paul Bedjan and Sebastian Brock (2nd ed. Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2006), vol. 6, pp. 108–162.
Lines:	1146

OUTLINE

This metrical homily provides a meditative reflection on a group of biblical episodes concerning the Nativity providing special attention to the statements and behaviour patterns of the personages involved. The Nativity of the hidden Son is a wonder. Human faculties alone are inadequate to explain that mystery. The worthy mode is to dedicate the harp of words to the divine fingers to strike upon them so as to speak out of the impulse of the Spirit (49–62). It is the Spirit that stirs up and evokes the narration of the story of the Son. In fact the Father alone knows about the former birth of the Son. The latter birth from the virgin Mary is made manifest to the earthly out of divine mercy. But neither of them, that from the Father nor the other from Mary, is explained (65–84).

After the introductory discourses Jacob of Serugh follows the style of dispute poems dealing with the Angel's encounter with Mary, the sagacious woman, and her prudent questioning. The foolishness of Eve and the prudence of Mary are set in contrast through their outcomes (177–256). The two aspects of inquiries, i.e., that of disputation and the loving-discernment are explained from Mary's inquiry and the doubt of Zachariah (327–360). Mary, the 'believing woman', lovingly purified her temple for the Holy One as Moses sanctified the people for the divine descent at Sinai. During Mary's visit to Elizabeth the Spirit poured forth from the Holy One upon the sterile woman a flood of prophecy. Elizabeth recognized the Son of the Mighty One and acknowledged the blessedness of Mary as more highly distinguished than the chariot and Mount Sinai because her womb became a glorious throne (467–530).

Before the doubtful Joseph, Mary offers to take the water of trial instituted by Moses. She explained the truth with the facts from Nature and the Scripture. Mary cited the virgin birth of Adam from the earth, the birth of Eve from Adam, the birth of the lamb from the tree, the flow of rivers from the rock, the staff that sprouts forth, the jawbone that brought out water. She argued that if these things from Nature were not enough, there were prophetic testimonies. "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and give birth to Immanuel" (Isa 7:14). Mary begged her Son to reveal the truth to Joseph so that he might be sanctified to approach the Nativity with holiness and become a true witness to it (639–690). Joseph, a son of David, became convinced of the truth as the angel demonstrated how Mary was of the household of David and in truth the Immanuel dwelt in her as was foretold by Isaiah; thus he became a believing, life-long herald of the truth of the Nativity (735–770).

While Caesar wrote down men in the list of indebtedness and servitude, the Son wrote down the offspring of Adam in the Book of Life and liberation. The Lord of kings ascended to Ephrathah, the town of David, and there the 'Fashioner of Babes' was born. The young ewe gave birth to the Lion's Whelp, the young dove to the young Eagle, and the beloved heifer to the Fatted Ox for the sacrifice on behalf of sinners (791–840). The Begetter of Babes became begotten corporeally, yet the seal of virginity remained intact. His birth is a wonder as it is divine and human. He is from the divine essence and from humanity; Son of the Majesty and of Mary. He is hidden in his divine being and revealed in his humanity (841–858).

The Chief Pastor came to liberate his flock but they did not recognize him. He stood at the door but mankind slept, failing to praise. He came in a humble state to re-establish the earth by his gentleness. His mighty dominion is not depicted in his clothing. Without lance and sword or chariot he is in a manger girded round in swaddling clothes. It is his sign (897–918). The innocent, simple and sincere pastors rejoiced in the Good News. They believed, glorified and brought their offerings to the Babe: lamb for the Priest, milk for the Infant and praise to the King (919–930). It is a great wonder that the chants of the sons of heaven and those of the earth were joined. Heaven and earth became commingled in praising the single Mediator who reconciled all by his Nativity (931–950).

Mary made supplications for the grace to take up the service to the exalted Child in the manner of Seraphs and Cherubs who are permanently at his service. She rejoiced at the reparation effected at the birth of her Son to all failures in the history of humanity. His birth brought blessings instead of thorns, Adam acquired divinity as he had sought, Eve rejoiced in the One

who removes the pains of her sufferings. The garden exults in the return of its heir. The scattered were gathered by the Son. Heaven and earth exult in the peace set up between them. A shoot has sprung up to become a staff for the aged world. A shoot from the house of David germinated to give drink to the thirsty earth. The Eagle looked out to cause the hawks to flee so as to set free the dove, the persecuted humanity, in its nest. The heir became awakened to snatch his possessions from the despoiler. The fractured and weak heel has gained strength. The people in captivity has returned to peace and the pearl has re-entered among those who recognize it (985–1008). Prophets, David, Isaiah and Zachariah rejoice because their prophecies have come out into reality. Joseph too rejoices as he became worthy to see the Son. The heavenly and the earthly sang praises. The lullabies of Mary were joined to the chants of the heavenly beings. The harp of virginity resounded among the angels (1009–1032).

On the glorious and beautiful feast day of the Nativity the world has been renewed and a new creation established. Hence, the Church should offer gifts of praise to the Son on the day in which Zion was driven out and the despised, barren and humiliated woman, who of her own will thrust down in the shrine of demons, was exalted. The sorrowful woman exulted and assumed consolation because her bridegroom came to gather her from among the idols for the marriage feast. The woman enslaved to idolatry and the maid-servant of the demons obtained freedom because the Lord, the Mighty One, broke the fetters of her imprisonment and put to flight the demons. The Light has shone forth and shattered the gates of darkness and the imprisoned went out of darkness (1033–1056).

On the day of the Nativity the Painter has restored the image of Adam; the Master-builder has rebuilt the fallen house; the Lord of Adam has reconciled himself with Adam; the Shepherd found the lost sheep and carried it into Paradise; the flock of the people has been restored from the 'hidden wolf' and the outsiders became household members. God himself has descended and unmasked the idols. The Mighty One and the Warrior made the captivity return by binding the captor. The Physician came to the wounded for bandaging and healing as well as to reward the healed ones. The Doctor came to the fractured and the Strengthener to the infirm. The 'Leaven of Life' pervaded the lump of humanity, the 'Salt from the Most High' descended to season insipid humanity with his stable taste. The enfeebled soul is strengthened to abandon all lures and desires and forgiveness proceeded from the King's court to enrich all (1057–1090).

The winter period of the Nativity lacks natural fruits, but the Fruit of life was sent with mercy from the Rich One by sprinkling treasures; when

the trees shed off leaves, stripped bodies are adorned with recovery as Adam exchanges his leaves for the 'garment of light'; when the seeds are scorched in the cold, the Blessed Seed springs forth from the earth that is not ploughed. The nakedness of the leaders of our race has been clothed and the Treasure that blotted out all debts has come to us as the Great Blessing. The Light and the Radiance descended conquering darkness and exposing the snares of the evil one. As sun conquers darkness the evil one was overcome by our Redeemer. All old things became renewed by the Lord of kings with mercy and the new Commandment proceeded to set peace on earth (1091–1134).

SUMMARY

The Marvellous and the Ineffable Revelation in the Nativity (1–16)
Seeking the Hidden and the Revealed One (17–48)
The Singing of the Homily by the Impulse of the Spirit (49–62)
The Nativity of the Son from the Daughter of David (63–90)
Disclosure of the Good Will and the Confession of the Desire to Praise (91–102)
The Hidden Mercy of the Grace in Adam (103–120)
The Reason for the Angel's Mission to Mary (121–154)
The Encounter between the Angel and Mary (155–208)
The Angel's Exhortation to Mary to Concede to the Hidden Divinity (209–218)
Mary's Discerning Question (219–256)
The Angel's Explanation on the Truth of the Virgin-Birth (257–326)
Aspects of Contention versus the Loving Discernment for the Word (327–360)
The Angel's Explanation to the Inquiry of Mary (361–382)
Mary's Preparation for the Indwelling of the Son (383–418)
The Son's Dwelling in Mary while not Departing from the Father (419–466)
Mary's Visit to Elizabeth and the King's Visit to His Servant (467–502)
The Singing of 'the Daughter of Levites' in Praise of Mary (503–530)
Mary's Return from Elizabeth (531–554)
Doubts of Righteous Joseph and the Ordeal of Mary, the Believing Woman (555–588)
The Disputation between Mary and Joseph (589–638)
Scriptural and Natural Testimonies for Mary's Virginity (639–668)
Mary's Supplication to the Son (669–690)
The Encounter between the Angel and Joseph (691–734)
Believing Joseph, the Herald of the Truth of Nativity (735–762)

Joseph, the Cherub of Flesh and the Virtuous Servant (763–790)
The Inscription of the Name of Adam in the Book of Life (791–814)
The Wonder of 'the Begetter of Babes' Begotten Corporeally (815–842)
The Birth of 'the Hidden and the Revealed One' (843–864)
Glory in the Highest, Peace on Earth, Hope to Adam and Praise Everywhere (865–896)
The Unrecognized Pastor of the Rational Sheep (897–918)
The Nativity of the Sacrificial Lamb (919–930)
The Reconciliation of Heaven and Earth in the Wonder of the Nativity (931–954)
Mary's Supplication with Adoration and Praise (955–984)
Nativity, the Day of Joy and Exultation (985–1008)
Nativity, the Day of Joy for the Prophets and Virginity (1009–1032)
The Day of Renewal and Freedom (1033–1056)
The Day of Restoration and Rebuilding (1057–1090)
The Month of Divine Fruits for the Impoverished Creation (1091–1126)
The Day of Renovation and Praise (1127–1147)

Text and Translation

THE MARVELLOUS AND THE INEFFABLE REVELATION IN THE NATIVITY

1 Your Nativity, O Son of God, is a wonder and my mouth is inadequate
to narrate your great story with my enfeebled tongue.
Your revelation is exalted above all human mouths and how is it possible
that I who am feeble should narrate the story of your nativity?
5 O Lord, the whole world is not able to narrate your story
and how shall I, an unworthy, hasten (to narrate)[2] your story?
Your Father alone knows how your birth (took place),
and it being but dust by what mouth shall the soil[3] speak about you?
Veiled is that human revelation of yours even from your mother
10 so who is there to deal with your divine nativity?
There is no mouth that is able to exhaust (the telling of) you except that of your Father;
How then and by what means shall my tongue reach out to your hidden(being)?
Concealed is your story even from the watchers[4] and by what expression
shall I send to you the gifts of my frail words?

---

[2] Lit., 'press on,' 'push through.'

[3] The Syriac term *'aprā* (soil) here in the terminology of Jacob means 'a human being.'

[4] The Syriac word *'irē* can be translated as 'watchers,' 'vigilants,' 'wakeful ones,' 'angels.' Wakefulness is their common character. Christ is called 'the Wakeful One,' who has come to make humanity wakeful on earth (cf. Ephrem, *HNat* 1:61–62, 21:4; *HEpiph* 4:8). This view is based on Dan 6:23, Matt 25:13; Luke 20:35–36. Syriac protomonasticism gives greater accent on the ideal of 'angelic wakefulness,' cf. S. P. Brock, *The Luminous Eye,* pp. 140–141. *Mal'akē* and *'irē* are quite often used synonymously in the early Syriac literature, cf. W. Cramer, *Die Engelvorstellungen,* pp. 41, 71; K. E. McVey, *Ephrem the Syrian*, p. 229 n. 36.

B-Br 6

ﻭَﻗَﺒِﻠُﻮﺍ ﻣِﻨﻪ ﻣُﺤَﻘَّﻘﺎﺕ

ﻣَﻘﺎﻣِﻬِﻢ ﻭَﻣَﻌَﻠُّﻤِﻪ ﻭَﻗُﻨُﻮﻣِﻪ ﻭَﺣُﻜَﻤِﻪ.

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1 ﺍَﻭَّﻝ ﻫِﻪ ﻣَﺤَﺒَّﺔ ﺍَﺧِﻴﻪ ﻛَﻨَﻔْﺴِﻪ ﻭَﻫِﻪ ﻗَﺎﻝَ ﻟَﻪ:
ﻛَﻤَﺎ ﺗَﺤَﺒُّﻮﻥَ ﻧُﻔُﻮﺳَﻜُﻢ ﻓَﺎﺣَﺒُّﻮﺍ ﺍَﻳْﻀًﺎ ﺍِﺧْﻮَﺗَﻜُﻢ.
ﻭَﻫِﻲَ ﻣَﺤَﺒَّﺔ ﻣَﻦْ ﻗَﺪْ ﻗَﺒِﻞَ ﻣَﻮْﻋِﻈَﺔَ ﺍَﺑِﻴﻪ:
ﻭَﺍﻟَّﺬِﻱ ﺍَﺑْﻐَﺾَ ﺍَﺧَﺎﻩُ ﻭَﻟَﻜِﻦْ ﻟَﻢْ ﻳَﺘُﺐْ ﻋَﻦْ ﺧَﻄِﻴَّﺘِﻪِ.
5 ﻟُﺎ ﻣِﻨﻪ ﻣَﻮْﻗِﻒَ ﺍُﺧْﺮَﻯ ﺣَﺴَﻨًﺎ ﻭَﻫُﻮَ ﻗَﻮْﻟُﻪ ﻟِﻠﻠَّﻪِ:
ﺍَﻧَﺎ ﺣَﺰِﻧْﺖُ ﺍَﻣَﺎﻡَ ﺍَﺳْﻜُﻮﻥَ ﻟَﻢْ ﺍَﺳْﺘَﻄِﻊْ.
ﺍَﻭْ ﺣَﺴَﺒَﻤَﺎ ﻳُﺒَﺎﺭِﻙُ ﺍَﻟﻠَّﻪُ ﻣَﻦْ ﻳَﺘُﻮﺏُ:
ﻣَﺜَﻠُﻪُ ﻛَﻤَﺜَﻞِ ﺍَﻳُّﻮﺏَ ﺍَﻭْ ﻣُﻮﺳَﻰ ﻫُﻮَ ﻗَﺎﻝَ.
ﻭَﻫَﺬَﺍ ﻫُﻮَ ﺍَﻳْﻀًﺎ ﻳُﻌْﻠَﻢُ ﻣِﻦْ ﻫُﻨَﺎ:
10 ﻭَﻫَﺬِﻩِ ﺍَﻟﺘَّﻮْﺑَﺔُ ﺍَﻳْﻀًﺎ ﻣَﻮْﺟُﻮﺩَﺓٌ ﻓِﻴﻨَﺎ.
ﻟُﺎ ﺃَﻥْ ﻗَﺪْ ﻳُﻘَﺎﻝَ ﻭَﻟَﻜِﻦْ ﺍِﻟَّﺎ ﻭَﺍﺣِﺪٌ:
ﻭَﻫُﻮَ ﻗَﺪْ ﺍَﺧْﻄَﺄَ ﺍِﻟَﻰ ﺍَﺧِﻴﻪِ ﻭَﻟَﻢْ ﻳَﺘُﺐْ.
ﻭَﻟَﻢْ ﻳَﻘُﻞْ ﻫُﻮَ ﻫَﺬَﺍ ﻣِﻦْ ﻧَﻔْﺴِﻪِ ﺑَﻞْ
ﺍَﻋْﻄَﻰ ﻟَﻨَﺎ ﻭَﺻِﻴَّﺔً ﻭَﻫَﻜَﺬَﺍ ﻳَﻨْﺒَﻐِﻲ.

Cherubs, the servants, have never learned where your abode is,
and to which place shall my mind proceed to speak about you?

SEEKING THE HIDDEN AND THE REVEALED ONE

Where shall I seek you because being not afar, nevertheless you are concealed?[5]
but how shall I speak about you, the manifest nativity, for your story is hidden?
To which place shall my senses fly to capture you?
To which place shall I look and see you, as you are invisible?
Whither shall the mind tread its way to seek you there
and on which path should the word move to recite your glories?
Where will you be found, upon the chariot or with Mary; Ezek 1:26
with your Father, or with Joseph in the land of Judea? Mark 2:l
In the bosom of your Father or indeed in the bosom of Mary;
with the physical mother or on the throne of crystal? Ezek 1:22; Rev 4:6
Can one find you on the fiery wings of dense feathers, 2 Sam 22:11; Ps 18:10
or are you carried about in the arms of the young mother?
Shall I see you on the backs of the Cherubs Ezek 1:1ff
or does your majesty dwell upon the knees of the believing woman?[6]
Is your brightness in the legions of sparkling rays of fire
or are you girdled round as a pauper in swaddling clothes in the manger? Luke 2:7
Did your essence dwell where there is no breath for the watchers,

[5] For similar views in Ephrem, cf. Ephrem, *HNat* 21:23–24.

[6] Mary is 'the believing woman' (Luke 1:45): It is in contrast with Zechariah who refused to believe the angel (Luke 1:20).

15 ꡔꡕꡖꡗ ꡘꡙꡚꡛ ꡜꡝꡞꡟ ꡠꡡꡢꡣ ꡤꡥꡦꡧ ꡨꡩꡪꡫ:
ꡬꡭꡮꡯ ꡰꡱꡲꡳ ꡴꡵꡶꡷ ꡸꡹꡺꡻ ꡼꡽꡾꡿ ❖
109 ꢀꢁꢂꢃ ꢄꢅꢆꢇ ꢈꢉꢊꢋ ꢌꢍꢎꢏ ꢐꢑꢒꢓ ꢔꢕꢖꢗ ꢘꢙꢚ:
ꢛꢜꢝꢞ ꢟꢠꢡꢢ ꢣꢤꢥꢦ ꢧꢨꢩꢪ ꢫꢬꢭꢮ ❖
ꢯꢰꢱꢲ ꢳꢴꢵꢶ ꢷꢸꢹꢺ ꢻꢼꢽꢾ:
20 ꢿꣀꣁꣂ ꣃ꣄ꣅ꣆ ꣇꣈꣉꣊ ꣋꣌꣍꣎ ꣏꣐꣑꣒ ❖
꣔꣕꣖꣗ ꣘꣙꣚꣛ ꣜꣝꣞꣟ ꣠꣡꣢꣣ ꣤꣥꣦꣧:
꣰꣱ꣲꣳ ꣴꣵꣶꣷ ꣸꣹꣺ꣻ ꣼ꣽꣾꣿ ❖
ꢀꢁꢂꢃ ꢄꢅꢆꢇ ꢈꢉꢊꢋ ꢌꢍꢎꢏ:
25 ꢐꢑꢒꢓ ꢔꢕꢖꢗ ꢘꢙꢚꢛ ꢜꢝꢞꢟ ❖
ꢠꢡꢢꢣ ꢤꢥꢦꢧ ꢨꢩꢪꢫ ꢬꢭꢮꢯ:
ꢰꢱꢲꢳ ꢴꢵꢶꢷ ꢸꢹꢺꢻ ꢼꢽꢾꢿ ❖
ꣀꣁꣂꣃ ꣄ꣅ꣆꣇ ꣈꣉꣊꣋ ꣌꣍꣎꣏ ꣐꣑꣒꣓:
꣔꣕꣖꣗ ꣘꣙꣚꣛ ꣜꣝꣞꣟ ꣠꣡꣢꣣ ❖
꣰꣱ꣲꣳ ꣴꣵꣶꣷ ꣸꣹꣺ꣻ ꣼ꣽꣾꣿ:
30 ꢀꢁꢂꢃ ꢄꢅꢆꢇ ꢈꢉꢊꢋ ꢌꢍꢎꢏ ❖
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ꢤꢥꢦꢧ ꢨꢩꢪꢫ ꢬꢭꢮꢯ ꢰꢱꢲꢳ ❖
ꢴꢵꢶꢷ ꢸꢹꢺꢻ ꢼꢽꢾꢿ ꣀꣁꣂꣃ ꣄ꣅ꣆꣇:

or have you laid hold of the humble breasts together with our humanity?
Among the swift movements of that chariot are you being kept hidden?
Or are the lullabies of the destitute woman dear to you?
Are you sanctified by the tongues of fire
or are you embraced by the mouth of virginity?
Are you carried high above the eloquent wheels — Ezek l:19ff
or are you honoured by the hands of that daughter of David?[7]
Are the pure beams of flames yoked to your honour
or are you clinging to the bosom of the daughter of the poor?[8]
Do you have your kingdom in the hidden tabernacle higher than the principalities
or in the cave folded over by rock does your authority reside?
From the abode of the Seraphs, 'Holy, holy, holy' is offered to you by the chant — Isa 6:3
or is it perchance the milk from the Shepherds that is offered to you?
Here below, indeed, shall I search for you, above shall I gaze on you, or are you present to all?
(Are you) at Eprathah,[9] or in heaven, or in all confines (of the world)?

[7] Mary, 'Daughter of David' (again below, line 66); Syriac tradition stresses the double Davidic descent of Christ, because both Mary and Joseph are of the 'household of David.' This is due to the Syriac Gospel tradition in *Diatessaron* (cf. *CEC* I 26) and old Syriac Gospels; *HNat* 2:13–16; see R. Murray, "Mary, the Second Eve," p. 374 n. 10. Jacob of Serugh also, following Ephrem, holds this double Davidic descent; K. E. McVey, *Ephrem the Syrian*, p. 79 n. 84.

[8] Mary, 'Daughter of the poor,' cf. below, line 833.

[9] *Eprathah* is primarily the name of a clan and hence the name of the region of which Bethlehem is the town; cf. Mic 5:2; Ruth 4:11; Gen 35:19, 48:7; 1 Sam 17:12.

ꠀ ꠁꠂꠃꠄꠅ ꠆ꠇꠈꠉꠊ ꠋꠌꠍ ꠎꠏꠐꠑ ꠒꠓ ꠔꠕꠖꠗ꠆
ꠘꠙꠚꠛꠜ ꠝꠞꠟꠠꠡ ꠢꠣꠤꠥꠦ ꠧ꠨꠩꠪꠫ ꠬꠭ ꠮꠯꠰:
ꠀ ꠱꠲꠳꠴꠵ ꠶꠷꠸꠹꠺ ꠻꠼꠽꠾꠿ ꡀ꠆ꡁ꠆

THE SINGING OF THE HOMILY BY THE IMPULSE OF THE SPIRIT

My Lord, I am inadequate because your story is fearful and I am feeble.
Your homily is rich and my tongue is poor and by what means shall I comprehend you?
Serene is the search for you, but my mind is agitated and how shall I be capable?
Your honour is luminous, but my mind is dark, so how shall I see you?
Shall I choose silence?[10] But it breeds harm, seeing that it belongs to inertia.
Shall I venture to speak? But there is fear there, which frightens me.
I am perplexed between the two and which shall I take hold of?
I am afraid to be silent and I fear to speak, so what shall I do?
I am giving the harp of my words to you and let me borrow your finger;
and in your hymns let the sound whisper to your glory.
By the impulse of the Spirit let my mind bring forth the homily of your praise,[11]
for I am not competent for your homily: please speak through me.
I am the flute, when your word is breath and your story is the voice.
Please take control of it, and by your means may we sing to you using what is your own.[12]

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[10] Cf. Nat III, 77–82; Bedjan I, 270, 11–20. According to Jacob homiletical preaching is an overflow of the wonder from the mind of the one meditating on the divine mysteries. Hence to remain silent is culpable; Alwan, *Création*, II, 20 also speaks of 'foul silence' *(šetqā sanyā)* which is harmful.

[11] The Spirit speaking through one's own members reflects *Odes of Solomon* 6:1–2.

[12] Cf. AMS IV 650, 1–16 for the metaphor of homilist as 'Flute.'

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ꠀꠢꠣꠀꠀ ꠀꠣꠢꠀꠀ

THE NATIVITY OF THE SON FROM THE DAUGHTER OF DAVID

Stir up my words and my tongue by your power for the telling of you
and by your gift let me sing the story of your nativity.
Since your first birth[13] is concealed even from the watchers,
make me worthy to sing out concerning this latter one from the daughter of David.[14]
To that (first birth) even the mind will not venture to approach,
but concerning this (birth), it does attempt to speak.
And that (first birth) is not to be spoken of (even) by the tongue of flame.[15]
About this, the mouth strives to narrate, because this is (the gift) of grace.
Regarding that which is from eternity, not even the Seraphs are able to inquire into (it),
but towards this present one even the shepherds have approached.
About that first (birth) only the Father is aware of how it was;
but regarding this the creation resounds together with everything in it.
That (birth) is remote from all ranks of the heavenly beings
but this one is approached even by the Magi with their offerings. Matt 2:1,11
That hidden (birth) is concealed because even to the Cherubs His place is alien
but this one is made manifest by the compassion that He poured upon earthly beings.

[13] Cf. Bedjan III, 323, 3–6 (ET in HTM, *The True Vine* 4 (1990), p. 38); Ephrem, *HNat* 27:15–20, 13:7, 21:7–8; *HVirg* 31:1.

[14] On the double Davidic descent of Jesus see note 7, above.

[15] 'Tongue of flame' refers to 'heavenly hosts.'

꣖꣗꣘꣙ ꣚꣛꣜ ꣝꣞꣟ ꣠꣡꣢ ꣣꣤꣥ ꣦꣧꣨ ꣩꣪꣫꣬:
꣭꣮꣯꣰꣱ꣲ ꣳꣴꣵ ꣶꣷ꣸ ꣹꣺ꣻ ꣼ꣽꣾꣿ ꤀꤁꤂꤃꤄꤅:
꤆꤇꤈ ꤉ꤊꤋ ꤌꤍꤎ ꤏꤐꤑ ꤒꤓꤔ ꤕꤖ ꤗꤘꤙ꤬ ꤚꤛ ꤜꤝꤞ: 65
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ꤻꤼꤽ ꤾꤿꥀ ꥁꥂꥃ ꥄꥅꥆ ꥇꥈꥉ ꥊꥋꥌ ꥍꥎꥏ ꥐꥑꥒ:
꥓꥔꥕ ꥖꥗꥘ ꥙꥚꥛ ꥜꥝꥞ ꥟ꥠꥡ ꥢꥣꥤ ꥥꥦꥧ ꥨꥩꥪ:
ꥫꥬꥭ ꥮꥯꥰ ꥱꥲꥳ ꥴꥵꥶ ꥷꥸꥹ ꥺꥻꥼ ꥽꥾꥿ ꦀꦁꦂ:
ꦃꦄꦅ ꦆꦇꦈ ꦉꦊꦋ ꦌꦍꦎ ꦏꦐꦑ ꦒꦓꦔ ꦕꦖꦗ ꦘꦙꦚ: 70
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꦳ꦴꦵ ꦶꦷꦸ ꦹꦺꦻ ꦼꦽꦾ ꦿꦀꦁꦂ ꦃꦄꦅ ꦆꦇꦈ ꦉꦊꦋ:
ꦌꦍꦎ ꦏꦐꦑ ꦒꦓꦔ ꦕꦖꦗ ꦘꦙꦚ ꦛꦜꦝ ꦞꦟꦠ ꦡꦢꦣ:
ꦤꦥꦦ ꦧꦨꦩ ꦪꦫꦬ ꦭꦮꦯ ꦰꦱꦲ ꦳ꦴꦵ ꦶꦷꦸ ꦹꦺꦻ ꦼꦽꦾ: 75
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ꦛꦜꦝ ꦞꦟꦠ ꦡꦢꦣ ꦤꦥꦦ ꦧꦨꦩ ꦪꦫꦬ ꦭꦮꦯ ꦰꦱꦲ ꦳ꦴꦵ ꦶꦷꦸ

Yet this manifest birth of yours is not at all revealed to the investigators,[16]
so how, therefore, is one able to speak about that hidden (birth)?
Neither that [birth] from the Father nor that from Mary is explained
because unique is your nativity, hidden as well as revealed and it is ineffable.
Unique is your birth beyond times, remote is the telling of it;
but this other one is within the seals of virginity.
Regarding the first [birth], one is not even able to say how or when,
while even that latter one perplexes the scribes by its splendour.
I will stay away from that distant [birth] which should not be investigated,
and let me press on a little bit to that which is close at hand, which is ineffable.
Since I am not capable, let me be not failed, in that I am meditating (on it);
Since I am not adequate, let me be not blamed because I am praising.

DISCLOSURE OF THE GOOD WILL AND THE CONFESSION OF THE DESIRE TO PRAISE

My Lord, look upon my will, what it prepares regarding your story,
so that without neglectfulness let my tongue engage itself to your praise.
If the crown of my homily is not beautiful, it is not on account of me,
because all the gems I have received from you I am setting in it
And even though the arrangement of my words is not beautiful, it is your gift;

[16] 'Investigators' are those who arrogantly seek to strip off the veils of mystery; cf. R. Murray, "The Theory of Symbolism," p. 14ff; *Symbols of Church and Kingdom*, p. 89; T. Jansma, "Narsai and Ephrem," pp. 60–66.

ܐܦܠܐ ܗܘܐ ܡܠܒܫ ܓܫܡܐ ܓܠܐ ܠܚܒܪܘܬܐ:
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ܘܡܢ ܗܘ ܡܠܒܫ ܟܣܝܐ ܕܓܫܡܐ ܘܠܐ ܡܬܥܠܠ܀
ܡܢ ܡܬܠܒܫ ܠܟܠ ܡܢ ܐܒܐ ܡܬܒܝܢ ܡܪܟܗ:
ܘܗܘܐ ܐܢܫܐ ܠܓܒܗ ܡܢ ܠܒܢܐ ܕܒܐܘܠܐ܀
ܥܠ ܡܕܡܐ ܐܦܠܐ ܠܡܐܡܪ ܕܐܝܟ ܐܡܠܝ:
ܕܐܦ ܗܘ ܐܢܫܐ ܠܟܘܪܐ ܡܦܩܣ ܒܡܫܘܚܬܗ܀
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ܘܠܐ ܥܒܕ ܐܢܐ ܠܐ ܐܬܪܢ ܒܓܘܫܡܗ ܐܢܐ:
ܘܠܐ ܡܘܦܐ ܐܢܐ ܠܐ ܐܬܠܒܢܐ ܕܡܬܥܒܕ ܐܢܐ܀
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ܘܠܗ ܫܡܝܐܝܬ ܓܪܡ ܠܫܒܚ ܥܠ ܡܘܠܕܗ܀
ܐܘ ܠܐ ܡܨܐ ܡܬܠܐ ܕܡܬܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܡܢ ܕܐܝܟ ܗܘ:
ܘܟܠܗܘܢ ܠܫܢܐ ܕܢܫܬܥܠ ܡܢܗ ܥܒܪ ܐܢܐ ܠܗ܀
ܘܠܐ ܡܨܐ ܥܒܪܐ ܕܢܦܠ ܡܘܫܠܡ ܗܘ:

for your great story is not belittled by (my) inadequate mouth
For, if someone with a stutter invokes the king with a confused diction
the name of the kingship is not belittled by the stammering.
And if account of the divinity is narrated
by the ignorant the divinity is never belittled
With this agreement, behold, I am approaching near, not to comprehend,
but to make manifest by my words the whole of my desire.[17]

THE HIDDEN MERCY OF THE GRACE IN ADAM

Let me speak a little about the grace that was upon Adam
because his Lord has come down to restore his image that had been corrupted — Gen 1:26
My words will plait a crown of praises for Him whom it pleased
to come to birth, while He was not in need of birth
Let me frame a crown by my phrases and I will offer (it) to Him,
to the King[18] who humbled himself among the poor
Let me take up the gifts of mixed voices and bring them into the presence
of the 'Radiance-clothed One' who became human from the daughter of David.
Let me approach and present my words as my offering, as I worship
the Priest who came to become a sacrifice on behalf of sinners. — Heb 7:27
Let me place my farthing upon his table, while I am offering
for the Shepherd who descended to become a victim[19] among His flock. — Ezek 34:11ff

[17] For similar orientations in Ephrem, cf. *HPar* 4:11.
[18] Lit., 'one who dispenses crowns.'
[19] Here the Syriac word *debḥā* can be rendered as 'victim' or as 'sacrifice.'

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My word will enfold His story and I will offer (it)
to the Word who came and became flesh but was not changed
Mercy grew fervent in the furnace of compassion which had fashioned Adam
and again received him in nativity so that again he [*Adam*] shall be renewed by Him [*Divine Mercy*].[20]
Hidden was the mercy of that grace[21] which formed Adam
and came to wash the lump of earth that had wasted away through (its wounds)

THE REASON FOR THE ANGEL'S MISSION TO MARY

The King wished to send his Son to rehabilitate the earth,[22]
Which the evil one had led away captive with the rows of idols, that he had brought along and (so) subjugated it.
His ambassadors[23] resounded to inform the earth before His advent,

[20] Cf. Narsai, *PO* 40, pp. 94/95 (lines 381–382).

[21] 'grace' is considered as the mother of all compassion, cf. Bedjan V, 368, 8–9; III, p. 52, 6–7, 12–13; T. Bou Mansour, *La Théologie de Jacques de Saroug*, pp. 41–42.

[22] The 'Earth' in the early Syriac literature signifies 'everything that is born from dust.' Here mention should be made that Adam and his progeny are formed from the earth. Again in this couplet, 'to rehabilitate' means 'to bring back to the proper order,' cf. Bedjan III 28,17–20; T. Jansma, "L'Hexaméron de Jacques de Saroug," p. 17; Bedjan III 321–334, "Why Our Lord Abode upon the Earth for Thirty Years"; ET from HTM, TV 4 (1990), pp. 37–49 (esp. pp. 37–38, lines 11–18 = Bedjan III 322,3–10)]. Jacob's view of the reordering of the world is seen in various stages. Adam's priestly service plays a key role. The fall of Adam brought in the disorder. A reordering and repopulation of the world took place through Noah, again through Abraham, Melchizedek, Moses and finally through Christ, which is carried on by the Christian priesthood; cf. "Homily on Priesthood and the Altar," cf. M. Albert, "Sur le Sacerdote et l'Autel," pp. 54–64 (lines 11–36, 49–60, 79–82, 161–62); M. J. Pierre, *Aphrate le Sage Persan I*, p. 169 (n. 86).

[23] The prophets and the seers are the ambassadors who proclaimed the advent of Christ.

ܐܟܘ ܒܟܪܐ ܕܠ ܠܥܒܕܐ ܫܘܠܛܢܐ ܒܝܬ ܡܠܟܐ ܕܐܢܬ ܗܘ ܐܠܗܐ ܕܫܡܝܐ ܘܐܪܥܐ ܘܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܐܬܐ ܡܢ ܙܪܥܐ ܕܕܘܝܕ ܘܫܡܗ ܕܝܘܚܢܢ ܩܕܡ ܠܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܐܬܐ ܒܥܠܡܐ ܘܠܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܕܐܢܫ ܗܘ ܫܘܠܛܢܐ ܕܐܒܝ

so that the Son of the virgin should be announced by His messengers
The ambassadors made an assault on the persecutor but he was not terrified.
They shot at him arrows but he did not move away from the captives.[24]
The Merciful One saw that the world was wearied and the evil one had got the upper hand,
And He sent His Son to snatch the prey away from the captor.
The Lord of the watchers indicated to the watcher to prepare (the way) before Him
so that He should descend and dwell while not departing from His Father.
Upon the throne He commanded him and sent him to the footstool that is below His feet.
Heaven is His throne and the earth His footstool, so whither to did He migrate?[25] Isa 66:1
What necessity was there for the angel to travel before Him,
and what reason has summoned the watcher for His descent?
The spiritual beings in their swiftness do not fly on high with Him
and the fiery ones in their fiery nature do not come near Him.
His impetus is swifter than that of the Cherubs if He should travel,
and His flight is swifter than that of the Seraphs if He departs.
The flash of lightning is weary and it does not overtake Him if He steps out
and the wind is powerless to capture Him, because He is swifter than it.
His nature is limpid and His course is swift and why indeed

[24] Ephrem, *HNat* 18:34.
[25] Cf. Narsai, *PO* 40, pp. 36/37 (lines 3–10).

27 ꠀꠀꠀ

has He sent the watcher to announce His descent?
Perhaps it was so that the young mother might not be alarmed
when she saw she was pregnant in her womb without marital union.
And on account of this He sent the watcher to make Mary aware of (the fact)
who it was and who dwelt in her and whom she carried in her virginity.
He spoke gently the commandment and the angel from the ranks (of angels) heeded.
And he [the angel] hastened on swift wing that he might not be delayed in his going.
For those words (that) Gabriel heard were hidden
because they were told secretly by the Exalted One.
Only that he was sent is revealed to us in the scriptures, Luke 1:26
but in what manner, however, is not heard because it is hidden.
Those things that he [the angel] had learned did he teach the believing woman
and the story that he heard, he explained to the blessed woman.

THE ENCOUNTER BETWEEN THE ANGEL AND MARY

The edict issued forth from the King's court and the watcher carried it.
He flew swiftly above the ranks of the heavenly beings.
He advanced beyond the gatherings and he was not hindered among the orders (angels);
He flew between the ranks and did not delay among the legions.
He rent asunder the flame, cleaved the wind and trod under foot the burning coals. Ezek 10:2
He mounted on the whirlwind and travelled on the road of flame.
He left behind angels in their gatherings and passed beyond them. He left the watchers in their ranks and flew and descended.

29 ꠀꠀꠀ

He passed over the city of the heavenly ones and
emerged to our place. He flew from the height,
reached towards Mary and bowed himself before
her.
The servant saw the mother of the King and bent his
head downwards
and stretched out the missive and kept silence as
someone prudent.
The ambassador approached and gave the letter that
was full of peace,[26]
which was mystically written as in a mystery.
He opened it before her and began to read in his elo-
quence:
"Peace be with you, the blessed one among the Luke 1:28
women, behold, my Lord is with you."
For the dove has seen the eagle and it became agitated
as he alighted beside her while she was not aware who
had sent him.
She was not acquainted with what he wanted or who
he was;
which was his place, and what course had called him
towards her.
By his saying to her, "Behold, my Lord is with you",
she learned that he was a servant;
but who is his Lord, she was not knowing because she
has not heard about him.
"Tell me O man who is your Lord and which is his
place?
You resemble to me a man, for I myself am not ac-
quainted with your Lord.
Does He know me, or indeed, is your greeting just a
pretended one?

[26] Mary is also considered as a letter full of mysteries, Bedjan III, 591, 4–5; cf. *Odes of Solomon* 23;5–22; Anonymous *madrāša* on Mary, London, BL Ms. Add. 14520 (No 6); See a tr. by S. P. Brock, *Bride of Light* (Moran Etho 6; 1994), pp. 97–98; p. 86 (No. 25).

ꠓꠔꠕ ꠖꠗꠘꠙ ꠚꠛꠜꠝꠞ ꠟꠠꠡꠢ ꠣꠤꠥ ꠦꠧ꠨꠫
꠩꠪ ꠬꠭꠮꠯ ꠰꠱꠲꠳ ꠴꠵꠶꠷ ꠸꠹꠺ ꠻꠼꠽:
꠾꠿ ꠀꠁ ꠂꠃꠄ ꠅ꠆ꠇ ꠈꠉꠊꠋ ꠌꠍꠎ ꠏꠐꠑꠒ꠫
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꠻꠼꠽꠾ ꠿ꡀꡁ ꡂꡃꡄ ꡅꡆꡇ ꡈꡉꡊ ꡋꡌꡍ ꡎꡏꡐ:
ꡑꡒꡓ ꡔꡕꡖ ꡗꡘꡙ ꡚꡛꡜ ꡝꡞꡟ ꡠꡡꡢ ꡣꡤꡥ ꡦꡧꡨ꠫
ꡩꡪꡫ ꡬꡭꡮ ꡯꡰꡱ ꡲꡳ꡴ ꡵꡶꡷ ꡸꡹꡺ ꡻꡼꡽: 116
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ꢼꢽꢾ ꢿꣀꣁ ꣂꣃ꣄ ꣅ꣆꣇ ꣈꣉꣊ ꣋꣌꣍ ꣎꣏꣐:
꣑꣒꣓ ꣔꣕꣖ ꣗꣘꣙ ꣚꣛꣜ ꣝꣞꣟ ꣠꣡꣢ ꣣꣤꣥꣦ ꣧꣨꣩꠫
꣰꣱ꣲ ꣳꣴꣵ ꣶꣷ꣸ ꣹꣺ꣻ ꣼ꣽꣾ ꣿ꤀꤁ ꤂꤃꤄: 175
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ꤚꤛꤜ ꤝꤞꤟ ꤠꤡꤢ ꤣꤤꤥ ꤦꤧꤨ ꤩꤪ꤫ ꤬꤭꤮:
꤯ꤰꤱ ꤲꤳꤴ ꤵꤶꤷ ꤸꤹꤺ ꤻꤼꤽ ꤾꤿꥀ ꥁꥂꥃ꠫
ꥄꥅꥆ ꥇꥈꥉ ꥊꥋꥌ ꥍꥎꥏ ꥐꥑꥒ ꥓꥔꥕ ꥖꥗꥘:

Has He directed you to me and when did He inform me that He would send (you) to me?
Where have I seen Him and what have I told Him that He has become familiar with me?
Have I heard His word, or perhaps not, and have you caused me to be deceived?
On what agreement has He sent you to me? Do not conceal from me;
and what is His rank so that you, the powerful one, called Him 'Lord'?
Indeed, is He like you, or may be His splendour is greater than yours?
Is He glorious like you or again is His beauty ineffable?
If you are a servant clothed with lightning upon your members,
then your Lord is entirely fire as you say.
If your countenance is sun and (its) flame is powerful
then not even the sun can look on your Lord in that He dazzles it.
If from your breathing the house goes up in smoke because you are a fiery one,
then not even a mountain can bear your Lord in that (case) it will be dissolved.
From your footsteps live coals fall away, and how is it then
that your Lord treads upon the rock and He does not burn it up?
Although you are a servant your clothes shed fire,
then your Lord will rain down flame by His power.
If in your cloak sparks are interwoven, as I have seen,
the garment of your Lord is concentrated light, and it cannot be contained.
If your voice resounds like the voice of armies in my ears,
when that sender of yours speaks the earth trembles.
If it is that from your lips goes out thunder
your Lord's voice, if sent out, would crack the rocks.
Are you a servant, or perchance are you the lord of the servants?

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Do you truly have a Lord, or are you the Lord?
If you are a servant, do not conceal from me who is your Lord.
Reveal and explain to me the whole of your story: I myself have marvelled in you.
How is His name; which is His people and where is His place?
Is He far distant or is He from this region? Manifest to me everything !"

THE ANGEL'S EXHORTATION TO MARY TO CONCEDE TO THE HIDDEN DIVINITY

The watcher said: "It is enough girl, conclude your discourse !
My Lord is concealed and His place is hidden and His name is a secret.
He is exalted above us and He is concealed from you and is hidden from all.
He is distant with His Father, and He dwells with you, and how can you investigate?
I have not seen Him, but to you who are His mother, behold He will be made manifest.
He is concealed from our race and how I should speak of him, I do not know.
His voice is heard by me but as for His appearance, I am not capable of (seeing it).
His voice is in my ears while His place is alien to my eyes.
That He is coming to you, I have heard from Him, and behold, I have announced it to you.
May be He is in you; learn the truth from Him."

MARY'S DISCERNING QUESTION

Mary became alarmed at the wonder that the watcher told of

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9 

but she was not convinced that she should not ask a question, because she was sagacious.[27]
She pressed on prudently to learn from the angel
so that the truth might not be hidden from her while it was being explained.
"O fiery one, if you are not propounding any explanation
in my ears the story that you are telling will not be accepted.
Give me heed and I shall learn from you the truth;
make manifest your word, do not speak to me by way of signs.
I am not hasty as my mother Eve who was cajoled:[28] Gen 3:4–7
because she believed out of a single saying, she tasted death.
She did not ask her messenger how it would happen
that from the tree divinity should reach her. Gen 3:5[29]
If she had asked she would have vanquished him;
therefore, allow me to approach you with a question, do not be reluctant.
Not even the announcement of the serpent was more terrible than yours
if your explanation is not more believable than his.

[27] The sagaciousness of Mary is a homiletical theme with salvation historical overtones, especially in contrast with Eve who failed to be discerning in her behaviour and failed to ask a question of clarification to the deceitful serpent; cf. Bedjan VI, 625, 18–631, 13; 641, 16–642, 3; Alwan, *Création*, III, 425–58; Ephrem, *HEccl* 46: 11–13. The encounters between the Angel and Mary, and between Joseph and Mary (lines 573ff) have some close similarities with the two Dialogue poems on these two topics; ET in S. P. Brock, *Bride of Light* (Moran Etho 6; 1994), pp. 111–24.

[28] Cf. Alwan, *Création*, III, 431–504; Ephrem, *HEccl* 35, 36, 37.

[29] Ephrem, *HEccl* 41:1–3.

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꠻꠼꠽꠾ ꠿ꡀꡁꡂ ꡃꡄꡅꡆ ꡇꡈꡉꡊ꠆
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I am not an infant[30] like her who became a snare to her husband,
for unless I have learned the truth, you shall not depart.
Behold, she had wanted (to become) a goddess which would be beyond (her)
nature and you have announced to me a conception without marital union.
The purpose is the same; if the explanation does not distinguish it;
and without argumentation your word will not be heard by me.
Do not be to me like the deceitful serpent that spoke and moved on. Gen 3:1–5
Await, let us see what you are teaching if you are true.
How it is possible for this to happen which I have heard from you
when no man has known me (carnally) from the time of my birth.
At what time has any womb given birth without marital relation,
and where and when did this happen among women?
Which earth has given forth a sheaf when it has not been sown,
and what cluster has sprung up from a vine without it being tilled?
What fruit has there been in a tree without irrigation?
What field has arrived at a heap (of corn) without a ploughman?
By whom has it been seen that a conception has taken place without conjugal relation,
and who is the one who has experienced the state of giving birth and has not been known (carnally)?

[30] On account of their innocence Adam and Eve are infants in paradise when compared with the evil serpent, an instrument of the evil one; cf. Alwan, *Création*, IV, 107; for a detailed survey of the various aspects of Adam's infant state see Alwan, *Création*, III, 34, n. 24; R. Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom*, pp. 304–306. But with regard to the aspect of obedience to the commandment Adam is believed to have had enough maturity to make a free choice.

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Who has seen an embryo in the womb of a virgin,
or who has encountered virginity preserved even after conception?
If you do not give me explanation it is difficult for me to be convinced
and if you do not debate with me unto the end, you are not true."

THE ANGEL'S EXPLANATION ON THE TRUTH OF THE VIRGIN-BIRTH

The angel heard the disputation of the sagacious woman and wonder laid hold of him
and the skilful teacher began explaining about the things to come.
He wondered about the young girl who was subtle in her questions
and his language floated over the explanation to demonstrate it to her.
He saw that she was eager to inquire about the truth.
He was prepared to demonstrate it to her exactly.
He saw the young girl who was sharp in (her) replies,
and he polished his word to speak with her the fearful things:
"I have not led you astray, O Daughter of David, accept my words;
Truth resounds from my words distinctly.
I am not a deceitful ambassador: Let me be believed by you.
My action is in truth, do not be doubtful about my arrival.
I am not like the serpent who deceived your mother in Eden. Gen 3:1–7
And if you would understand the suggestion of my words, that would inform you.
Do not exalt yourself over against your God, I am advising you.

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꣋꣌꣍꣎꣏꣐ ꣑꣒ꣳꣴ꣕꣖ ꣗꣘꣙꣚꣛꣜꣝
꣞꣟꣠꣡꣢꣣ ꣤ꣳꣴ꣥ꣳꣴ ꣦ꣳꣴ꣧ꣳꣴ꣨ꣳꣴ꣩ꣳꣴ꣪ꣳꣴ꣫ꣳꣴ꣬ꣳꣴ꣭ꣳꣴ꣮ꣳꣴ꣯ꣳꣴ꣰ꣳꣴ꣱ꣳꣴꣲꣳꣴꣳꣳꣴꣴꣳꣴꣵꣳꣴꣶꣳꣴꣷꣳꣴ꣸ꣳꣴ꣹ꣳꣴ꣺ꣳꣴꣻꣳꣴ꣼ꣳꣴꣽꣳꣴꣾꣳꣴꣿꣳꣴ꤀ꣳꣴ꤁ꣳꣴ꤂ꣳꣴ꤃ꣳꣴ꤄ꣳꣴ꤅ꣳꣴ꤆ꣳꣴ꤇ꣳꣴ꤈ꣳꣴ꤉ꣳꣴꤊꣳꣴꤋꣳꣴꤌꣳꣴꤍꣳꣴꤎꣳꣴꤏꣳꣴꤐꣳꣴꤑꣳꣴꤒꣳꣴꤓꣳꣴꤔꣳꣴꤕꣳꣴꤖꣳꣴꤗꣳꣴꤘꣳꣴꤙꣳꣴꤚꣳꣴꤛꣳꣴꤜꣳꣴꤝꣳꣴꤞꣳꣴꤟꣳꣴꤠꣳꣴꤡꣳꣴꤢꣳꣴꤣꣳꣴꤤꣳꣴꤥꣳꣴꤦꣳꣴꤧꣳꣴꤨꣳꣴꤩꣳꣴꤪꣳꣴ꤫ꣳꣴ꤬ꣳꣴ꤭ꣳꣴ꤮ꣳꣴ꤯ꣳꣴꤰꣳꣴꤱꣳꣴꤲꣳꣴꤳꣳꣴꤴꣳꣴꤵꣳꣴꤶꣳꣴꤷꣳꣴꤸꣳꣴꤹꣳꣴꤺꣳꣴꤻꣳꣴꤼꣳꣴꤽꣳꣴꤾꣳꣴꤿꣳꣴꥀꣳꣴꥁꣳꣴꥂꣳꣴꥃꣳꣴꥄꣳꣴꥅꣳꣴꥆꣳꣴꥇꣳꣴꥈꣳꣴꥉꣳꣴꥊꣳꣴꥋꣳꣴꥌꣳꣴꥍꣳꣴꥎꣳꣴꥏꣳꣴꥐꣳꣴꥑꣳꣴꥒꣳꣴ꥓ꣳꣴ꥔ꣳꣴ꥕ꣳꣴ꥖ꣳꣴ꥗ꣳꣴ꥘ꣳꣴ꥙ꣳꣴ꥚ꣳꣴ꥛ꣳꣴ꥜ꣳꣴ꥝ꣳꣴ꥞ꣳꣴ꥟ꣳꣴꥠꣳꣴꥡꣳꣴꥢꣳꣴꥣꣳꣴꥤꣳꣴꥥꣳꣴꥦꣳꣴꥧꣳꣴꥨꣳꣴꥩꣳꣴꥪꣳꣴꥫꣳꣴꥬꣳꣴꥭꣳꣴꥮꣳꣴꥯꣳꣴꥰꣳꣴꥱꣳꣴꥲꣳꣴꥳꣳꣴꥴꣳꣴꥵꣳꣴꥶꣳꣴꥷꣳꣴꥸꣳꣴꥹꣳꣴꥺꣳꣴꥻꣳꣴꥼꣳꣴ꥽ꣳꣴ꥾ꣳꣴ꥿ꣳꣴꦀꣳꣴꦁꣳꣴꦂꣳꣴꦃꣳꣴꦄꣳꣴꦅꣳꣴꦆꣳꣴꦇꣳꣴꦈꣳꣴꦉꣳꣴꦊꣳꣴꦋꣳꣴꦌꣳꣴꦍꣳꣴꦎꣳꣴꦏꣳꣴꦐꣳꣴꦑꣳꣴꦒꣳꣴꦓꣳꣴꦔꣳꣴꦕꣳꣴꦖꣳꣴꦗꣳꣴꦘꣳꣴꦙꣳꣴꦚꣳꣴꦛꣳꣴꦜꣳꣴꦝꣳꣴꦞꣳꣴꦟꣳꣴꦠꣳꣴꦡꣳꣴꦢꣳꣴꦣꣳꣴꦤꣳꣴꦥꣳꣴꦦꣳꣴꦧꣳꣴꦨꣳꣴꦩꣳꣴꦪꣳꣴꦫꣳꣴꦬꣳꣴꦭꣳꣴꦮꣳꣴꦯꣳꣴꦰꣳꣴꦱꣳꣴꦲꣳꣴ꦳ꣳꣴꦴꣳꣴꦵꣳꣴꦶꣳꣴꦷꣳꣴꦸꣳꣴꦹꣳꣴꦺꣳꣴꦻꣳꣴꦼꣳꣴꦽꣳꣴꦾꣳꣴꦿꣳꣴ꧀ꣳꣴ꧁ꣳꣴ꧂ꣳꣴ꧃ꣳꣴ꧄ꣳꣴ꧅ꣳꣴ꧆ꣳꣴ꧇ꣳꣴ꧈ꣳꣴ꧉ꣳꣴ꧊ꣳꣴ꧋ꣳꣴ꧌ꣳꣴ꧍ꣳꣴꧏꣳꣴ꧐ꣳꣴ꧑ꣳꣴ꧒ꣳꣴ꧓ꣳꣴ꧔ꣳꣴ꧕ꣳꣴ꧖ꣳꣴ꧗ꣳꣴ꧘ꣳꣴ꧙ꣳꣴ꧚ꣳꣴ꧛ꣳꣴ꧜ꣳꣴ꧝ꣳꣴ꧞ꣳꣴ꧟ꣳꣴꧠꣳꣴꧡꣳꣴꧢꣳꣴꧣꣳꣴꧤꣳꣴꧥꣳꣴꧦꣳꣴꧧꣳꣴꧨꣳꣴꧩꣳꣴꧪꣳꣴꧫꣳꣴꧬꣳꣴꧭꣳꣴꧮꣳꣴꧯꣳꣴ꧰ꣳꣴ꧱ꣳꣴ꧲ꣳꣴ꧳ꣳꣴ꧴ꣳꣴ꧵ꣳꣴ꧶ꣳꣴ꧷ꣳꣴ꧸ꣳꣴ꧹ꣳꣴꧺꣳꣴꧻꣳꣴꧼꣳꣴꧽꣳꣴꧾꣳꣴ꧿ꣳꣴꨀꣳꣴꨁꣳꣴꨂꣳꣴꨃꣳꣴꨄꣳꣴꨅꣳꣴꨆꣳꣴꨇꣳꣴꨈꣳꣴꨉꣳꣴꨊꣳꣴꨋꣳꣴꨌꣳꣴꨍꣳꣴꨎꣳꣴꨏꣳꣴꨐꣳꣴꨑꣳꣴꨒꣳꣴꨓꣳꣴꨔꣳꣴꨕꣳꣴꨖꣳꣴꨗꣳꣴꨘꣳꣴꨙꣳꣴꨚꣳꣴꨛꣳꣴꨜꣳꣴꨝꣳꣴꨞꣳꣴꨟꣳꣴꨠꣳꣴꨡꣳꣴꨢꣳꣴꨣꣳꣴꨤꣳꣴꨥꣳꣴꨦꣳꣴꨧꣳꣴꨨꣳꣴꨩꣳꣴꨪꣳꣴꨫꣳꣴꨬꣳꣴꨭꣳꣴꨮꣳꣴꨯꣳꣴꨰꣳꣴꨱꣳꣴꨲꣳꣴꨳꣳꣴꨴꣳꣴꨵꣳꣴꨶꣳꣴ꨷ꣳꣴ꨸ꣳꣴ꨹ꣳꣴ꨺ꣳꣴ꨻ꣳꣴ꨼ꣳꣴ꨽ꣳꣴ꨾ꣳꣴ꨿ꣳꣴꩀꣳꣴꩁꣳꣴꩂꣳꣴꩃꣳꣴꩄꣳꣴꩅꣳꣴꩆꣳꣴꩇꣳꣴꩈꣳꣴꩉꣳꣴꩊꣳꣴꩋꣳꣴꩌꣳꣴꩍꣳꣴ꩎ꣳꣴ꩏ꣳꣴ꩐ꣳꣴ꩑ꣳꣴ꩒ꣳꣴ꩓ꣳꣴ꩔ꣳꣴ꩕ꣳꣴ꩖ꣳꣴ꩗ꣳꣴ꩘ꣳꣴ꩙ꣳꣴ꩚ꣳꣴ꩛ꣳꣴ꩜ꣳꣴ꩝ꣳꣴ꩞ꣳꣴ꩟ꣳꣴꩠꣳꣴꩡꣳꣴꩢꣳꣴꩣꣳꣴꩤꣳꣴꩥꣳꣴꩦꣳꣴꩧꣳꣴꩨꣳꣴꩩꣳꣴꩪꣳꣴꩫꣳꣴꩬꣳꣴꩭꣳꣴꩮꣳꣴꩯꣳꣴꩰꣳꣴꩱꣳꣴꩲꣳꣴꩳꣳꣴꩴꣳꣴꩵꣳꣴꩶꣳꣴ꩷ꣳꣴ꩸ꣳꣴ꩹ꣳꣴꩺꣳꣴꩻꣳꣴꩼꣳꣴꩽꣳꣴꩾꣳꣴꩿꣳꣴꪀꣳꣴꪁꣳꣴꪂꣳꣴꪃꣳꣴꪄꣳꣴꪅꣳꣴꪆꣳꣴꪇꣳꣴꪈꣳꣴꪉꣳꣴꪊꣳꣴꪋꣳꣴꪌꣳꣴꪍꣳꣴꪎꣳꣴꪏꣳꣴꪐꣳꣴꪑꣳꣴꪒꣳꣴꪓꣳꣴꪔꣳꣴꪕꣳꣴꪖꣳꣴꪗꣳꣴꪘꣳꣴꪙꣳꣴꪚꣳꣴꪛꣳꣴꪜꣳꣴꪝꣳꣴꪞꣳꣴꪟꣳꣴꪠꣳꣴꪡꣳꣴꪢꣳꣴꪣꣳꣴꪤꣳꣴꪥꣳꣴꪦꣳꣴꪧꣳꣴꪨꣳꣴꪩꣳꣴꪪꣳꣴꪫꣳꣴꪬꣳꣴꪭꣳꣴꪮꣳꣴꪯꣳꣴꪰꣳꣴꪱꣳꣴꪲꣳꣴꪳꣳꣴꪴꣳꣴꪵꣳꣴꪶꣳꣴꪷꣳꣴꪸꣳꣴꪹꣳꣴꪺꣳꣴꪻꣳꣴꪼꣳꣴꪽꣳꣴꪾꣳꣴ꪿ꣳꣴꫀꣳꣴ꫁ꣳꣴꫂꣳꣴ꫃ꣳꣴ꫄ꣳꣴ꫅ꣳꣴ꫆ꣳꣴ꫇ꣳꣴ꫈ꣳꣴ꫉ꣳꣴ꫊ꣳꣴ꫋ꣳꣴ꫌ꣳꣴ꫍ꣳꣴ꫎ꣳꣴ꫏ꣳꣴ꫐ꣳꣴ꫑ꣳꣴ꫒ꣳꣴ꫓ꣳꣴ꫔ꣳꣴ꫕ꣳꣴ꫖ꣳꣴ꫗ꣳꣴ꫘ꣳꣴ꫙ꣳꣴ꫚ꣳꣴꫛꣳꣴꫜꣳꣴꫝꣳꣴ꫞ꣳꣴ꫟ꣳꣴꫠꣳꣴꫡꣳꣴꫢꣳꣴꫣꣳꣴꫤꣳꣴꫥꣳꣴꫦꣳꣴꫧꣳꣴꫨꣳꣴꫩꣳꣴꫪꣳꣴꫫꣳꣴꫬꣳꣴꫭꣳꣴꫮꣳꣴꫯꣳꣴ꫰ꣳꣴ꫱ꣳꣴꫲꣳꣴꫳꣳꣴꫴꣳꣴꫵꣳꣴ꫶ꣳꣴ꫷ꣳꣴ꫸ꣳꣴ꫹ꣳꣴ꫺ꣳꣴ꫻ꣳꣴ꫼ꣳꣴ꫽ꣳꣴ꫾ꣳꣴ꫿ꣳꣴ꬀ꣳꣴꬁꣳꣴꬂꣳꣴꬃꣳꣴꬄꣳꣴꬅꣳꣴꬆꣳꣴ꬇ꣳꣴ꬈ꣳꣴꬉꣳꣴꬊꣳꣴꬋꣳꣴꬌꣳꣴꬍꣳꣴꬎꣳꣴ꬏ꣳꣴ꬐ꣳꣴꬑꣳꣴꬒꣳꣴꬓꣳꣴꬔꣳꣴꬕꣳꣴꬖꣳꣴ꬗ꣳꣴ꬘ꣳꣴ꬙ꣳꣴ꬚ꣳꣴ꬛ꣳꣴ꬜ꣳꣴ꬝ꣳꣴ꬞ꣳꣴ꬟ꣳꣴꬠꣳꣴꬡꣳꣴꬢꣳꣴꬣꣳꣴꬤꣳꣴꬥꣳꣴꬦꣳꣴ꬧ꣳꣴꬨꣳꣴꬩꣳꣴꬪꣳꣴꬫꣳꣴꬬꣳꣴꬭꣳꣴꬮꣳꣴ꬯ꣳꣴꬰꣳꣴꬱꣳꣴꬲꣳꣴꬳꣳꣴꬴꣳꣴꬵꣳꣴꬶꣳꣴꬷꣳꣴꬸꣳꣴꬹꣳꣴꬺꣳꣴꬻꣳꣴꬼꣳꣴꬽꣳꣴꬾꣳꣴꬿꣳꣴꭀꣳꣴꭁꣳꣴꭂꣳꣴꭃꣳꣴꭄꣳꣴꭅꣳꣴꭆꣳꣴꭇꣳꣴꭈꣳꣴꭉꣳꣴꭊꣳꣴꭋꣳꣴꭌꣳꣴꭍꣳꣴꭎꣳꣴꭏꣳꣴꭐꣳꣴꭑꣳꣴꭒꣳꣴꭓꣳꣴꭔꣳꣴꭕꣳꣴꭖꣳꣴꭗꣳꣴꭘꣳꣴꭙꣳꣴꭚꣳꣴ꭛ꣳꣴꭜꣳꣴꭝꣳꣴꭞꣳꣴꭟꣳꣴꭠꣳꣴꭡꣳꣴꭢꣳꣴꭣꣳꣴꭤꣳꣴꭥꣳꣴꭦꣳꣴꭧꣳꣴꭨꣳꣴꭩꣳꣴ꭪ꣳꣴ꭫ꣳꣴ꭬ꣳꣴ꭭ꣳꣴ꭮ꣳꣴ꭯ꣳꣴꭰꣳꣴꭱꣳꣴꭲꣳꣴꭳꣳꣴꭴꣳꣴꭵꣳꣴꭶꣳꣴꭷꣳꣴꭸꣳꣴꭹꣳꣴꭺꣳꣴꭻꣳꣴꭼꣳꣴꭽꣳꣴꭾꣳꣴꭿꣳꣴꮀꣳꣴꮁꣳꣴꮂꣳꣴꮃꣳꣴꮄꣳꣴꮅꣳꣴꮆꣳꣴꮇꣳꣴꮈꣳꣴꮉꣳꣴꮊꣳꣴꮋꣳꣴꮌꣳꣴꮍꣳꣴꮎꣳꣴꮏꣳꣴꮐꣳꣴꮑꣳꣴꮒꣳꣴꮓꣳꣴꮔꣳꣴꮕꣳꣴꮖꣳꣴꮗꣳꣴꮘꣳꣴꮙꣳꣴꮚꣳꣴꮛꣳꣴꮜꣳꣴꮝꣳꣴꮞꣳꣴꮟꣳꣴꮠꣳꣴꮡꣳꣴꮢꣳꣴꮣꣳꣴꮤꣳꣴꮥꣳꣴꮦꣳꣴꮧꣳꣴꮨꣳꣴꮩꣳꣴꮪꣳꣴꮫꣳꣴꮬꣳꣴꮭꣳꣴꮮꣳꣴꮯꣳꣴꮰꣳꣴꮱꣳꣴꮲꣳꣴꮳꣳꣴꮴꣳꣴꮵꣳꣴꮶꣳꣴꮷꣳꣴꮸꣳꣴꮹꣳꣴꮺꣳꣴꮻꣳꣴꮼꣳꣴꮽꣳꣴꮾꣳꣴꮿꣳꣴꯀꣳꣴꯁꣳꣴꯂꣳꣴꯃꣳꣴꯄꣳꣴꯅꣳꣴꯆꣳꣴꯇꣳꣴꯈꣳꣴꯉꣳꣴꯊꣳꣴꯋꣳꣴꯌꣳꣴꯍꣳꣴꯎꣳꣴꯏꣳꣴꯐꣳꣴꯑꣳꣴꯒꣳꣴꯓꣳꣴꯔꣳꣴꯕꣳꣴꯖꣳꣴꯗꣳꣴꯘꣳꣴꯙꣳꣴꯚꣳꣴꯛꣳꣴꯜꣳꣴꯝꣳꣴꯞꣳꣴꯟꣳꣴꯠꣳꣴꯡꣳꣴꯢꣳꣴꯣꣳꣴꯤꣳꣴꯥꣳꣴꯦꣳꣴꯧꣳꣴꯨꣳꣴꯩꣳꣴꯪꣳꣴ꯫ꣳꣴ꯬ꣳꣴ꯭ꣳꣴ꯮ꣳꣴ꯯ꣳꣴ꯰ꣳꣴ꯱ꣳꣴ꯲ꣳꣴ꯳ꣳꣴ꯴ꣳꣴ꯵ꣳꣴ꯶ꣳꣴ꯷ꣳꣴ꯸ꣳꣴ꯹ꣳꣴ꯺ꣳꣴ꯻ꣳꣴ꯼ꣳꣴ꯽ꣳꣴ꯾ꣳꣴ꯿ꣳꣴﬀꣳꣴﬁꣳꣴﬂꣳꣴﬃꣳꣴﬄꣳꣴﬅꣳꣴﬆꣳꣴﬓꣳꣴﬔꣳꣴﬕꣳꣴﬖꣳꣴﬗꣳꣴ
ꠀꠁꠂꠃꠄꠅ꠆ ꠇꠈꠉꠊꠋꠌ ꠍꠎꠏꠐꠑꠒ ꠓꠔꠕꠖꠗꠘ

It is not that I am misleading you so that you should snatch divinity[31] for yourself.
I am magnifying my Lord, I am giving you His peace,
for I have not slandered Him before you as in the case of your mother. Gen 3:5
I am not stripping you of glory, as happened in the garden; Gen 3:7
I have brought a cloak (so that) you can cover your forefather who was stripped bare.
I am not weaving for you a garment of shame from leaves. Gen 3:7[32]
I have brought a garment of glory[33] for Adam to be clothed in it.[34]
My Lord is true and I am announcing the truth to you
and since you asked me, "how it will happen", hear and understand.
The Holy Spirit will come to you in a holy manner
and the power of the Exalted One will abide[35] upon you lovingly. Luke 1:35
The Fashioner of babes[36] will fashion for him a body in you and clothe himself (in it);[37]

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[31] This couplet is set in sharp contrast with the deceitful message of the serpent in Eden. The attempt to snatch divinity at a wrong time in a wrong manner was the wrong doing of Adam. In fact he rebelled against his own god-given nature, especially through the wrong conception that one acquires divinity from a created tree.

[32] Alwan, *Création*, III, 683–6.

[33] 'Garment of glory,' cf. *HNat* 17:4; 5:4; T. Kronholm, *Motifs from Genesis*, pp. 216–217.

[34] Ephrem, *HPar* 4:5.

[35] On *'aggen* see S. P. Brock, " *'Aggen* in the Syriac Versions of Luke 1:35," pp. 222–233; "The Lost Old Syriac at Luke 1:35," pp. 117–131; '*Maggnanuta*,' pp. 121–129; *Isaac of Nineveh*, p. 77, tr. p. 88.

[36] 'Fashioner of babes' is a title of Christ. God conceives each human person first and then later only one is born in the world; Jacob of Serugh: cf. 489, 828, and III, 350 below; also Bedjan V, 447 (Hom. 165, on the Presentation, line 3; ET in MHMJS 7; Apocryphal Acts: "Acts of John," *AAA*, p. 37; Aphrahat: *Dem* XVII 7,8; Ephrem: *HNat* 4:170; Narsai: *PO* 40, pp. 60/61 (1. 384).

[37] Cf. Ephrem, *HNat* 4:160–1.

꣊꣋ ꣌꣍꣎ꣀ ꣏꣐꣑꣒꣓ ꣔꣕꣖꣗ ꣘꣙꣚ ꣛꣜꣝ ꣞꣟ ꣠꣡꣢꣣
꣔꣤꣥ ꣦꣧꣨꣩ ꣪꣫ ꣬꣭꣮꣯ ꣰꣱ꣲ ꣳ ꣴꣵꣶ ꣷ ꣸꣹꣺ ꣻ ꣼ꣽꣾ:
꣊꣋ ꣿ ꣀꣁꣂ ꣃ꣄ ꣅ꣆꣇꣈ ꣉꣊꣋ ꣌꣍꣎ꣀ ꣏꣐꣑꣒꣓ ꣔꣕꣖꣗ ꣘꣙꣚ ꣛꣜꣝ ꣞꣟ ꣠꣡꣢꣣
121 ꣊꣋ ꣤ꣳ ꣦꣧꣨꣩ ꣪꣫ ꣬꣭꣮꣯ ꣰꣱ꣲ ꣳ ꣴꣵꣶ ꣷ ꣸꣹꣺ ꣻ ꣼ꣽꣾ: 275
ꣿ :
꣊꣋ ꣌꣍ ꣎ꣀ ꣏꣐꣑꣒꣓ ꣔꣕꣖꣗ ꣘꣙꣚ ꣛꣜꣝ ꣞꣟ ꣠꣡꣢꣣ ꣳ ꣤꣥꣦꣧ ꣨꣩ ꣪ꣳ ꣫ ꣬꣭꣮꣯:
꣰꣱ꣲ ꣳ ꣴꣵꣶ ꣷ ꣸꣹꣺ ꣻ ꣼ꣽꣾ ꣿ ꣀꣁꣂ ꣃ꣄ ꣅ꣆꣇꣈ ꣉꣊꣋ ꣌꣍꣎ꣀ ꣏꣐꣑꣒꣓ ꣔꣕꣖꣗ ꣘꣙꣚ ꣛꣜꣝ ꣞꣟ ꣠꣡꣢꣣ ꣳ ꣤꣥꣦꣧ ꣨꣩ ꣪ꣳ ꣫ ꣬꣭꣮꣯:
280 ꣰꣱ꣲ ꣳ ꣴꣵꣶ ꣷ ꣸꣹꣺ ꣻ ꣼ꣽꣾ ꣿ ꣀꣁꣂ ꣃ꣄ ꣅ꣆꣇꣈ ꣉꣊꣋ ꣌꣍꣎ꣀ ꣏꣐꣑꣒꣓ ꣔꣕꣖꣗ ꣘꣙꣚ ꣛꣜꣝ ꣞꣟ ꣠꣡꣢꣣ ꣳ ꣤꣥꣦꣧ ꣨꣩ ꣪ꣳ ꣫ ꣬꣭꣮꣯:
꣰꣱ꣲ ꣳ ꣴꣵꣶ ꣷ ꣸꣹꣺ ꣻ ꣼ꣽꣾ ꣿ ꣀꣁꣂ ꣃ꣄ ꣅ꣆꣇꣈ ꣉꣊꣋ ꣌꣍꣎ꣀ ꣏꣐꣑꣒꣓ ꣔꣕꣖꣗ ꣘꣙꣚ ꣛꣜꣝ ꣞꣟ ꣠꣡꣢꣣ ꣳ ꣤꣥꣦꣧ ꣨꣩ ꣪ꣳ ꣫ ꣬꣭꣮꣯:

the unbegotten Son shall be conceived in your virginity.
The Maker of the worlds interweaves a garment in your pure womb
and prepares himself a cloak of flesh on the web of your womb.
The power of the Exalted One will abide upon you while not being belittled
and from your purity He will take a body to become a man.
In the furnace of your womb He will cast and prepare an image for Adam;
and into it the God of all will lower himself to come to birth.
On that coin which the evil one damaged He will imprint His being
and through it He will ransom the whole world from servitude.
That unconstituted One dwells in the constitution of your womb and as a man
He will go out to the world corporeally.
Behold, He resides in you while not departing from His Father
and comes to you while He (also) is visiting all the ends (of the earth).
You should not find marital union necessary to receive conception,
because he who would dwell in you makes marital union fruitful by his command.
No partner will approach you so that you may become a mother
because your Son has coupled partnership of conjugal union in all races.
No male will approach you so that you should bear fruit from him
because the power of the Exalted One will become a babe in your virginity.
The guarded seal of your youthfulness would not be destroyed.

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The serene Radiance will thrust itself in, will enter and recline in your womb.
The virginal veils of your body would not be drawn back
because at the presence of the King they will be drawn tight, hung in protection.
Dismiss carnal thoughts form your mind
because the conception of your womb is the Son of God; do not inquire into it further:
Do not ponder where and how and in what manner and when,
for your birth-giving is hidden, so do not trouble yourself in investigating it.
And that utterance of my words should be believed by you clearly.
I am giving you also a demonstration to persuade you.
Behold, Elizabeth, your next of kin, has conceived; the aged who is grown old,
sterile for a long time; she has an offspring residing in her latter days. Luke 1:36
That sterile woman will defend your virginity
because for the creator nothing is difficult by the fact that He is the maker. Luke 1:37
Let the aged woman persuade you concerning my words, because they are true;
for, behold, this month is her sixth in the state of conception.
And if a sterile stem which lay in waste has given fruit
how is it difficult for you to receive conception in your virginity?
Your offspring is not investigated by us because He is the Power of the Most High.
Searching for Him is hidden, and except with love, it is not to be undertaken.
When I was sent to bring His good news I did not investigate Him.
I have made you hear, what I have heard without arguing.
I raised no question regarding it, "How it would happen"

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because I was not daring to ask a question, I had kept silence."

ASPECTS OF CONTENTION VERSUS THE LOVING DISCERNMENT FOR THE WORD

See, O prudent one, there is a (sort of) inquiry that is advantageous,
and there is questioning that generates harm by its doubt.
And there is someone who inquires, yet he is not belittled because he is on the side of truth.
And there is another one who disputes, and his discourse ends up in loss.
There are two aspects for the word when it is debated;
one that of contention and the other of love among discerning ones.
Because Mary questioned, she was not blamed by the angel.
She was eager to learn; she was not given over to investigate.
Zachariah had been rebuked because he asked in the holy of holies, — Luke 1:18–22[38]
and the sentence of silence was given for the doubting speech.
To the same instructor both have brought the same question
but to both of them not the same aspect was shown in his discourse.
The watcher blamed the priest because he asked: "How it shall happen?" — Luke 1:18
But to the young girl he gave the crown of explanation, not blaming her.
Not having believed (at first), Thomas shone forth (later) in faith — John 20:25ff[39]

[38] The contrast is between Zachariah and Mary. Faithless questioning and faithful inquiry regarding divine realities is a prominent catechetical theme from the early Syriac period: cf. Ephrem, *CDiat* I 11–13; *HFid* 9:8–10.

[39] Ephrem, *CDiat* XXI 27.

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for that womb of doubt too gave birth to the truth.
But with regard to Eve the lack of doubt produced death — Gen 3:1–7
for by the fact that she gave credence she was won over because she did not debate.
The aged Zachariah was convicted because he had questioned,
for he was there where there was not even any need for questions.
Since Mary inquired she crushed inquiry from the audacious,
and by her question she set down silence to the disputations.
If she had not stirred up a disputation with the watcher
disputation would have increased in the world concerning her birth-giving.
If she had been silent when she had heard (the words), "Behold, the Lord is with you," — Luke 1:28
iniquitous disputation would have choked the whole world.
Although the watcher explained to her the matter, there is (still) controversy
and although the angel revealed to her the truth, disputation has increased.
If the girl has not inquired, "How it will happen." — Luke 1:34
the fiery one too might have neglected (giving) an explanation
Blessed is Mary who became an occasion for the hidden matter,
so that it might be said clearly by the angel.
Without a question explanation is mute and it is not told,

and without request not even the truth is able to demonstrate itself

THE ANGEL'S EXPLANATION TO THE INQUIRY OF MARY[40]

For by her saying, "How it will happen," she also heard:

"The Holy Spirit and the power of the Exalted One will come to you." Luke 1:35

And if it was that the Spirit and the power of the Exalted One dwelt in the girl

who will neglect the child who is perfect in divinity

The Exalted Power is the true Son, without (any need of) investigation,

and this is His power, the arm and strength of (His) divinity.

Who could depict the truth by his word like Gabriel,

and who has weighed truth with his words as the angel?

Who was suffficient for the hidden story like the spiritual one [*the angel*]?

Who was swimming in the discourse of burning coals like the fiery one?

Who was knowing to explain the Son like His ambassador?

Who was capable of speaking about the Exalted One like His herald?

Who would be true, apart from the watcher who brought His tiding?

Who would be believed like that one who came from the abode of His Father?

Who would be accepted because of His revelation unless His Messenger?

Or who is capable like that one who came before His advent?

[40] Cf Alwan, *Création*, III, 439–60.

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ꡄꡅꡆꡇ ꡈꡉꡊꡋ ꡌꡍꡎꡏ ꡐꡑꡒꡓ ꡔꡕꡖꡗ:
ꡘꡙꡚꡛ ꡜꡝꡞꡟ ꡠꡡꡢꡣ ꡤꡥꡦꡧ ꡨꡩꡪꡫ꠆
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And even when a 'son[41] of His mystery' proclaimed
the story of the power of the Exalted One,
Men have dared to neglect Him in His nativity. John 1:11
And if when His own servant demonstrated His truth,
thus they rejected Him,
indeed, if he had kept silence, what harm would have
been accumulated?
And if a member of His household is not believed by
the disputants,
who could persuade the proud Scribes and been accepted?

MARY'S PREPARATION FOR THE INDWELLING OF THE SON

See, the inquiry of the blessed woman, how beneficial
it was!
For, if she had kept silent this truth would not have
shone forth.
She asked, learned, and henceforth she did not doubt.
The truth shone forth to her and after she saw it she
did not inquire into it.
She refined her sense and cleansed her mouth by the
inquiries.
She bound her word so that she might not again inquire into reverential matters.
She heard the voice (saying) that the power of the
Exalted One is coming to her,
and again she did not inquire into the matter of how,
and by whom or on what account.
She gathered and removed all (such) reckonings from
her mind.
She sprinkled her pure temple with love before the
Holy One.
She swept her hosue with the holiness that was within
her,

[41] 'son,' here in this context is a mode of expressing the status of close relationship.

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and she embellished its inner walls with all kinds (of acts) of reverence.[42]
Again in it she set in order the good signets of perfection
She replenished it with blossoms of all manners of modesty.
She levelled its land with the choice implements of virginity. Mark 1:3
She hung up as ornaments, crowns of praises of watchful care.
She took up and laced together veils out of chastity;
She spread out and stretched out spacious garments of watchfulness.
She poured out as oil, good deeds in her lamp Matt 25:1–13
and her great flame has been inflamed in the temple of her body.
She burned the fragrance of her prayers warmly
so that the pure fire of her faith should serve as incense.
She threw, as sweet spices, the sounds of praise into the fire of her love
and from her thanksgiving breathed the fragrance of choice incense.[43]
Her words went out like guards from the royal court
so that the Royal Son might enter along with them by the door of the ear.
And while the house was made radiant by these things in a holy manner,
the Son of the King entered and dwelt in the shrine of virginity.
She answered to the watcher with great love, "Let your Lord come.

[42] A possible echo of Aphrahat's imagery of the faithful as a house for the dwelling of the Lord. The house is built by good works; cf. Aphrahat, *Dem* I 2–5, 12.

[43] Mary's believing activity is a reflection of the state of Eve before the fall. Cf. T. Bou Mansour, *La Théologie de Jacques de Saroug*, I, p. 103. Mary became a paradise. The reference to incense especially alludes to Paradise and its fragrance, cf. Ephrem, *HPar* 7:10; 9:17; 11:12.

Behold, I am prepared so that according to His will
He might dwell within me.
Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord as you are His
servant
and if He has directed His will towards me, I do not
flee away."
Let it happen to me, according to your word sir, Mary said. Luke 1:38
She gave her consent and henceforth she received the
fruit in her womb.
She by her will opened the door and then the King
entered,
so that through free will the perfect seal might be
honoured.

THE SON'S DWELLING IN MARY WHILE NOT DEPARTING FROM THE FATHER

Not as they[44] say: "He [the Word] anticipated the
watcher and entered and dwelt in her",
for, would not even this be a wonder if it had oc-
curred?
For who keeps in step with that divine will which con-
trols the ends (of the world)
or who travels with the swiftness of the One who cre-
ated the abysses?
Who is able to go in his escort, since He is in all
places,
for how therefore is there wonder in this, if he had
gone beforehand?
Is it not a matter for praise were He removing the
cause for His being landed in her?
This is great, that His advent should have happened in
quietness.
As when Moses announced to the people as he de- Exod 19:10ff
scended the heights
and when they were sanctified,
then the Father descended upon the mountain.

[44] Here 'they' refers to other Syriac commentators.

ﻭﻻ ﺗﺠﻮﺯ ﺍﻟﺼﻼﺓ ﺧﻠﻒ ﺍﻟﻨﺎﺋﻢ ﻭﻻ ﺍﻟﻤﺘﺤﺪﺙ ﺇﻟﻰ ﺍﻟﻨﺎﺱ ﻭﻻ ﺍﻟﻤﺘﻜﻠﻢ ﻓﻲ ﺍﻟﺨﻄﺒﺔ ﻭﻻ ﺍﻟﻤﺸﺘﻐﻞ ﺑﺎﻟﻄﻌﺎﻡ ﻭﻻ ﺍﻟﻤﺪﺍﻓﻊ ﻟﻠﺒﻮﻝ ﻭﺍﻟﻐﺎﺋﻂ ﻭﻻ ﺍﻟﻤﺪﺍﻓﻊ ﻟﻠﺮﻳﺢ ﻭﻻ ﺍﻟﻤﺘﻠﺜﻢ ﻭﻻ ﺍﻟﻤﺘﻤﻄﻲ ﻭﻻ ﺍﻟﻤﺘﺮﺑﻊ ﻭﻻ ﺍﻟﻤﺘﻨﻔﻞ ﻭﻻ ﺍﻟﻤﺘﺨﺼﺮ ﻭﻻ ﺍﻟﻤﺘﺨﺼﺮ ﻭﻻ ﺍﻟﻤﺘﻨﻔﻞ ﻭﻻ ﺍﻟﻤﺘﺮﺑﻊ ﻭﻻ ﺍﻟﻤﺘﻤﻄﻲ ﻭﻻ ﺍﻟﻤﺘﻠﺜﻢ ﻭﻻ ﺍﻟﻤﺪﺍﻓﻊ ﻟﻠﺮﻳﺢ ﻭﻻ ﺍﻟﻐﺎﺋﻂ ﻭﺍﻟﻤﺪﺍﻓﻊ ﻟﻠﺒﻮﻝ ﻭﻻ ﺍﻟﻤﺸﺘﻐﻞ ﺑﺎﻟﻄﻌﺎﻡ ﻭﻻ ﺍﻟﻤﺘﻜﻠﻢ ﻓﻲ ﺍﻟﺨﻄﺒﺔ ﻭﻻ ﺍﻟﻤﺘﺤﺪﺙ ﺇﻟﻰ ﺍﻟﻨﺎﺱ ﻭﻻ ﺍﻟﻨﺎﺋﻢ ﺧﻠﻒ ﺍﻟﺼﻼﺓ ﻭﻻ ﺗﺠﻮﺯ ﺍﻟﺼﻼﺓ ﺧﻠﻒ ﺍﻟﻨﺎﺋﻢ ﻭﺍﻟﻤﺘﺤﺪﺙ ﺇﻟﻰ ﺍﻟﻨﺎﺱ ﻭﺍﻟﻤﺘﻜﻠﻢ ﻓﻲ ﺍﻟﺨﻄﺒﺔ ﻭﺍﻟﻤﺸﺘﻐﻞ ﺑﺎﻟﻄﻌﺎﻡ ﻭﺍﻟﻤﺪﺍﻓﻊ ﻟﻠﺒﻮﻝ ﻭﺍﻟﻐﺎﺋﻂ ﻭﺍﻟﻤﺪﺍﻓﻊ ﻟﻠﺮﻳﺢ ﻭﺍﻟﻤﺘﻠﺜﻢ ﻭﺍﻟﻤﺘﻤﻄﻲ ﻭﺍﻟﻤﺘﺮﺑﻊ ﻭﺍﻟﻤﺘﻨﻔﻞ ﻭﺍﻟﻤﺘﺨﺼﺮ ﻭﺍﻟﻤﺘﺨﺼﺮ ﻭﺍﻟﻤﺘﻨﻔﻞ ﻭﺍﻟﻤﺘﺮﺑﻊ ﻭﺍﻟﻤﺘﻤﻄﻲ ﻭﺍﻟﻤﺘﻠﺜﻢ ﻭﺍﻟﻤﺪﺍﻓﻊ ﻟﻠﺮﻳﺢ ﻭﺍﻟﻐﺎﺋﻂ ﻭﺍﻟﻤﺪﺍﻓﻊ ﻟﻠﺒﻮﻝ ﻭﺍﻟﻤﺸﺘﻐﻞ ﺑﺎﻟﻄﻌﺎﻡ ﻭﺍﻟﻤﺘﻜﻠﻢ ﻓﻲ ﺍﻟﺨﻄﺒﺔ ﻭﺍﻟﻤﺘﺤﺪﺙ ﺇﻟﻰ ﺍﻟﻨﺎﺱ ﻭﺍﻟﻨﺎﺋﻢ ﺧﻠﻒ ﺍﻟﺼﻼﺓ ﻭﺍﻟﻤﺘﺤﺪﺙ ﺇﻟﻰ ﺍﻟﻨﺎﺱ ﻭﺍﻟﻤﺘﻜﻠﻢ ﻓﻲ ﺍﻟﺨﻄﺒﺔ ﻭﺍﻟﻤﺸﺘﻐﻞ ﺑﺎﻟﻄﻌﺎﻡ ﻭﺍﻟﻤﺪﺍﻓﻊ ﻟﻠﺒﻮﻝ ﻭﺍﻟﻐﺎﺋﻂ ﻭﺍﻟﻤﺪﺍﻓﻊ ﻟﻠﺮﻳﺢ ﻭﺍﻟﻤﺘﻠﺜﻢ ﻭﺍﻟﻤﺘﻤﻄﻲ ﻭﺍﻟﻤﺘﺮﺑﻊ ﻭﺍﻟﻤﺘﻨﻔﻞ ﻭﺍﻟﻤﺘﺨﺼﺮ ﻭﺍﻟﻤﺘﺨﺼﺮ ﻭﺍﻟﻤﺘﻨﻔﻞ ﻭﺍﻟﻤﺘﺮﺑﻊ ﻭﺍﻟﻤﺘﻤﻄﻲ ﻭﺍﻟﻤﺘﻠﺜﻢ ﻭﺍﻟﻤﺪﺍﻓﻊ ﻟﻠﺮﻳﺢ ﻭﺍﻟﻐﺎﺋﻂ ﻭﺍﻟﻤﺪﺍﻓﻊ ﻟﻠﺒﻮﻝ ﻭﺍﻟﻤﺸﺘﻐﻞ ﺑﺎﻟﻄﻌﺎﻡ ﻭﺍﻟﻤﺘﻜﻠﻢ ﻓﻲ ﺍﻟﺨﻄﺒﺔ ﻭﺍﻟﻤﺘﺤﺪﺙ ﺇﻟﻰ ﺍﻟﻨﺎﺱ ﻭﺍﻟﻨﺎﺋﻢ ﺧﻠﻒ ﺍﻟﺼﻼﺓ ﻭﻻ ﺗﺠﻮﺯ ﺍﻟﺼﻼﺓ ﺧﻠﻒ ﺍﻟﻨﺎﺋﻢ

Thus the watcher brought the good news to the believing woman[45]
and when she had heard it, she prepared herself and then He dwelt in her.[46]
He manifested himself from the Father and Mary was illumined from His fullness.
The Flash of Light descended but did not cut off His root from His emissary.[47]
He dwelt in the pure woman while remaining glorious in the bosom of His Father.
He had entered into the womb but heaven was filled with His glory.
He shone forth in the young girl but his light was bright over the chariot.
In the womb is His conception but the wings of the watchers are set on fire from Him.
He is totally in Mary and He is fully in His Father and He is in all.
He stirs the Cherubs, He is clothed with the members (of the body), He is found with all.
The orders hasten, the legions tremble, the powers make joyful noise.
The gatherings tremble, the ranks cover themselves, the choirs resound.
They sanctify and on above they seek His concealed being
but He dwells in the womb, the heaven of flesh that came into being on the earth.
In the hollow of his hands he holds the bridles of the world and their governance.
He became an embryo in the virginal womb without any conjugal relation.

[45] Mary's believing activity is contrasted with the disbelief of Zachariah.

[46] Cf. Jacob's letters, Olinder, *Epistulae* XVI (p. 76) (*CSCO* 110); As Mary became sanctified the Hidden One resided in her.

[47] Cf. Ephrem, *HFid* 77:12–19 for the 'Root-Fruit' and Tree-Fruit' images explaining the relation between the Father and the Son.

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ﻫﺬﺍ ﺑﺼﺪﺍ ﺑﻪ ﻣﻌﺘﻤﺪ ﺍﻟﺤﻨﻔﺎ ﻭﺍﻟﻠﻪ:
ﻛﻼ ﻭﻫﺎ ﺣﻘﻨﻬﺎ ﻣﻘﺤﻤﺎ ﻣﻦ ﺃﻣﻌﻨﻰ ﴿
ﻭﻣﺜﻞ ﻛﻠﻜﻤﺎ ﻭﺟﻮﻩ ﻭﻛﻢ ﻛﻼ ﻣﺬﻛﺮﺍ: 435
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ﻣﻊ ﻛﺘﺎﺑﻬﺎ ﻭﻫﻮ ﺣﺴﺒﻬﺎ ﻣﺴﻪ ﻇﻼ ﴿
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ﻭﺃﻣﺎ ﻗﻨﻌﺎ ﻣﻨﻬﻢ ﻫﺒﻮﺍ ﻭﺣﻤﻰ ﻛﻘﻮﻟﻪ ﴿ 440
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ﻣﺤﻤﺪ ﻛﻼ ﻣﻘﻨﺪﻫﺎ ﻣﻘﻠﻼ ﻭﻟﺎ ﺃﻣﻼ ﴿

The measure of the whole earth is set in the span of His Father's hand.
A handful of flesh conceives Him in His small estate.
His power is extended over created beings but He is concealed in Mary.
He retains jurisdiction over the heights and the depths yet dwells in His mother.
He fashions and seals rational images within wombs
but He casts in His mother a corporeal image for His concealed being.
He casts the imprints of rationality in women
but He rears for himself an animated body in Mary.
He fashions and erects images of man in secrecy,
but He fashions himself to become a man from a daughter of man.
He gathers and interweaves all members (of the body) from marital union
but He prepares for himself corporeal senses in virginity.
He composes bodies in the wombs of conjugal communion
but He fashions a body without (marital) union for His glory.
He breathes a soul of perfection into all embryos
but He is made an embryo in the animate body which He has taken up.
Once He had resided in her, the thoughts of the believing woman were enlightened
and she carried brightness and it inflamed the beauty of her youthfulness.
The palace resounded with the Lord of kings who had entered and dwelt in her.
The virgin exulted in the Lord of sanctuaries whom she carried.
And as an object of wonder she was shining, modest, dignified and eager, perturbed;
and while being fearful, she was courageous, rejoicing, pure and chaste.

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ꡘꡙꡚꡛ ꡜꡝꡞꡟ ꡠꡡꡢꡣ ꡤꡥꡦꡧ ꡨꡩꡪꡫ꡵
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ꢼꢽꢾꢿ ꣀꣁꣂꣃ ꣄ꣅ꣆꣇ ꣈꣉꣊꣋ ꣌꣍꣎꣏꡵
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꣸꣹꣺ꣻ ꣼ꣽꣾ ꣿ꤀꤁꤂ ꤃꤄꤅ ꤆꤇꤈꤉ ꤊꤋꤌꤍ꡵ 455
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ꤹꤺꤻ ꤼꤽꤾꤿ ꥀꥁꥂꥃ ꥄꥅꥆꥇ ꥈꥉꥊꥋ ꥌꥍꥎꥏ:
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MARY'S VISIT TO ELIZABETH AND THE KING'S VISIT TO HIS SERVANT

And while the Radiance of the Father was inflamed in her virginity, Luke 1:39
she proceeded on foot to go and rejoice with the barren woman.
The young girl carried the Lord of the flock and ascended to see
the sterile ewe in whom a lamb had appeared after a long time. Luke 1:36
The dove flew with powerful feathers and reached Judea
to see and to be gladdened with that chick of the old eagle.
The female stag came carrying along the young stag.
The calf resounded so that the household of the Levites should exult in Judea.
The cloud, Mary, full of compassion burst forth and ascended
to go to water the thirsty land in which a fruit had come up.
The King sat on the chariot full of strength
to go out and to visit the house of his servants in diligence.
She proceeded on foot, the tabernacle ascended with the Majesty in it
in order to visit the ambassador, the son of the poor, in his house.
Virginity stood up that it might be raised to the house of the old woman
so that in youthfulness as well as in seniority wonder might increase.
She, the palace of flesh, walked and ascended, and the King was in it;
and stood at the door of the servant who shook, while still in his mother.
The Mighty One knocked and the ambassador trembled inside the house of his father.
The King spoke and the servant fell down, blessed and adored Him.

ⵜⵉⵎⵔⵉⵡⵉⵏ ⵜⵉⵏ ⵜⵜⵓⵔⵜ ⵜⵉⵏ ⵜⵉⵎⵔⵉⵡⵉⵏ ⵜⵉⵏ ⵜⵉⵎⵔⵉⵡⵉⵏ
ⵜⵉⵎⵔⵉⵡⵉⵏ ⵜⵉⵏ ⵜⵉⵎⵔⵉⵡⵉⵏ

The Creator gave a gesture and the offspring, the son of the barren woman, exulted.[48]
The power of the Son of God appeared and the child quaked. Luke 1:44
The commandment of the Fashioner of Babes whispered and made the infant stir up.
The will of the Almighty reached out and stirred the womb.
That Still One [Jesus] gazed, and that silent one [John] was perplexed.
That Hidden One commanded and that unborn showed its boldness.
The Son of the virgin willed it and the son of the sterile woman was astonished.
The hidden one had called and trembling fell on the silent offspring.
The Lion's Whelp roared in its (His) mother, as Jacob has written Gen 49:9[49]
and the calf, the son of old age, who heard His voice, quaked.
The young girl whispered gently in the ears of the aged woman. The voice crept in and entered and impelled the messenger of truth.
The voice crept in and entered and impelled the messenger of truth.
Swift exultation seized the infant in cheerfulness,
before the Son of David who had danced (for joy) in front of the Ark. 1 Chr 15:25–28
He persistently kicked his mother to go out to adore
so that his Lord who came to visit him may not remain at the door.

[48] Ephrem, *CDiat* I 30.

[49] In the Syriac literature the messianic name, 'Lion's Whelp,' has a wider usage in the background. Gen 49:9 and Rev 5:5 are seen in the context of the Davidic roots of Christ. Moreover, in the context of the incarnate Son with reference to his self-emptying, Phil 2:6 and Isa 53:7; John 1:26; Rev 6:1, the two estates of Christ, divine and human are portrayed through Lion-lamb imagery. See below, lines 495, 541, 835; Bedjan I, p. 191; II, pp. 611, 615 (Hom. 54, on the Resurrection I, lines 15, 83; ET in MHMJS 5); V, pp. 456, 463.

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ꠀꠢꠣꠞꠀ ꠀꠢꠣꠞꠀ ꠀꠢꠣꠞꠀ ꠀꠢꠣꠞꠀ꠰
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THE SINGING OF 'THE DAUGHTER OF LEVITES' IN PRAISE OF MARY

The Spirit poured forth from the Holy One upon the aged sterile woman,
infused into her the power to proclaim the truths to His mother.
A flood of prophecy surged out upon the Daughter of Aaron
to supply streams of hidden things to that Daughter of David.
That finger of the prophets struck upon the strings of her mouth
and she began to sing of future things with an exalted voice.
The daughter of the Levites became filled with the Holy Spirit
and she sang with her lips hymns that were full of praise.
"Who would grant to me that my Lord would come to me with His mother
and the Son of the Mighty One would visit the son of the feeble one in his house! Luke 1:43
How much blessings are there to me that I am made worthy to see you, blessed woman!
the new heaven that has travelled and come, entered with me.
That chariot with its variegated appearances is more insignificant Ezek 1:26
because it carried your Son in a type, but you in reality.
Your organs of sense are more resplendent than the circles of flames
because that one whom you carry, stirs them into motion.

ꠓꠔꠕꠖ ꠗꠘꠙ ꠚꠛꠜ ꠝꠞꠟꠠꠡ ꠢꠣꠤꠥ:
132 
505 
510 ꧏ
515 

Your womb is more awesome than the cloud upon the mount Sinai.[50]
for, behold, in you resides the tabernacle [shechina] of the Exalted One in a holy manner.
Your pure womb is a glorious throne to which no other is comparable;
For behold, in you lies silent that One at whom the Cherubs tremble.
That great dome of heavens is worthy together with you
because in both, behold, the same adored One is carried about.
For when your voice entered through my ears wonder took hold of me
because the silent infant whom I carry with its movement stirred me.
Your greeting in my ears as well as the gesture of your Son stimulated the infant
and behold, it pesters me in its persistence to go out towards Him.
And if the nature of his unformed state did not restrain him,
his will alone would draw him out in the joy of heart."

MARY'S RETURN FROM ELIZABETH

The Son of the King entered, dwelt in the house of His servant in a humble manner
and the place resounded with His praise abundantly.
Mary rejoiced because the sterile woman too testified about her conception — Luke 1:36,37
and that old woman defended (Mary's) youthfulness.
Mary remained three months with the Levites — Luke 1:56

[50] Cf. Exod 19:16–18; See a collection of *madraše* on Mary [London BL *Ms. Add. 14520* (No 6] (ed.) S. P. Brock, *Bride of Light*, *(Moran 'Eth'o*, No. 6), pp. 97–98. Mary's bosom is like the cloud over Mount Sinai (Ex 19:16) wherein resided the Lord of heights: a great wonder it was, for the mountain shook, whereas Mary's bosom did not stair at all (tr. by S. P. Brock, *The Bride of Light*, p. 98).

ܘܫܠܐ ܥܡ ܒܢܝ ܐܒܗܝ ܒܝ ܠܐ ܟܠ ܐܢܫ ܫܡܗ:
ܘܐ ܒܝ ܐܒܗ ܗܢܐ ܐܨܛܪܝ ܘܢܥܒ ܒܝܬ ܐܒܝ ܘܐܡܝ ܘܐ ܒܝ ܐܒܗ ܐܡ ܒܝ ܐܒܗ

and the time came for the sterile woman to bring forth the herald of truth.[51]
The ewe approached and cast herself down in front of the lioness
and sought from her [Mary] to yield to her [Elizabeth] feeble self.
"Go, powerful woman, remain in your place and give birth there
so that the flock of Zion may not flee away at your tearfulness.
Go, withdraw the Lion's Whelp into your calm house Gen 49:9
because the lamb that is in my womb fears to come to birth on account of Him.
The pangs of travail have vexed me and I fainted and fell down on the couch of pains
and the one-year-old lamb saw the aged Lion and he [the lamb] was struck with terror.
For he would not go out unless that Powerful One departed
because it is not proper that the King should be attending to the lowly.
It is not good that the Lord should stand and the servant should recline
and there is no means by which the Fire should serve before the straw.
Because of that the offspring thrusts itself back in the womb and fears to go out
so that he himself may not be dazzled by the flame of the One who dwells in you.
When the young bird crept out from the nest to go out to the ground
the Eagle[52] gazed at it, (and so) it took shelter secretly in the womb of its mother.
Let the Sun go, and behold, the small lamp can shine on the earth.

[51] Here 'the herald of truth' refers to John the Baptist.

[52] 'Eagle' is a title of Christ, see below, lines 838, 1001; Bedjan V, p. 463 (= Presentation, line 324, in MHMJS 7).

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Once it has departed from this place, your fruit will not be dishonoured by us."

DOUBTS OF RIGHTEOUS JOSEPH AND THE ORDEAL OF MARY, THE BELIEVING WOMAN

The King returned from the house of the servant to the house of His mother.
The virgin carried the Aged Infant; she came towards Joseph.
Joseph, her just spouse, saw her and wonder took hold of him. Matt 1:19
He gazed upon the chaste, modest, young girl and his heart became alarmed.
Her manner was chaste but her womb was full and what should he say?
Her appearance was pure but her womb was bearing (a child) and how should he look on?
Her appearance is humble, her offspring stirs and how should he be silent?
She is glorious in her house and he is aware of her conception and what he should approve?
Regarding her dignity he had wondered seeing how much she was shining forth;
from the reality of the conception which he saw he was fearing much.
And how patient Joseph was about the affair,
the womb cried out on account of the offspring conceived that dwelt in it.
And while he was guarding the mystery so that it might not be spoken by him,
he saw people pointing to the womb that carried the conceived (child)
And while he was seeking not to disclose the believing woman,
he saw other people who, as it were with a finger, were pointing at her.
The just man felt constrained at Mary's conceiving and at her chastity:
to speak out, he felt shame, but not to speak, he was unable.
He approached gently and began to speak kindly:

ꠗꠘ ꠙꠚꠛ ꠜ ꠝꠞ ꠟꠠꠡ ꠢꠣꠤ ꠥꠦ꠆
ꠧ꠨꠩ ꠪꠫ ꠬꠭꠮꠯ ꠰꠱ ꠲꠳ ꠴꠵ ꠶꠷ ꠸꠹ ꠺꠻ ꠼꠽ ꠾꠿ ꡀ꠆ 555
ꡁꡂ ꡃꡄ ꡅꡆꡇꡈ ꡉꡊꡋꡌ ꡍꡎꡏ ꡐꡑꡒ ꡓꡔ꠆
ꡕꡖꡗ ꡘꡙꡚ ꡛꡜꡝꡞ ꡟꡠꡡꡢ ꡣꡤꡥ ꡦꡧ꠆
ꡨꡩꡪ ꡫꡬꡭ ꡮꡯꡰꡱ ꡲꡳ꡴꡵ ꡶꡷꡸ ꡹꡺꠆
꡻꡼ ꡽꡾꡿ ꢀꢁꢂꢃ ꢄꢅꢆꢇ ꢈꢉꢊ ꢋꢌꢍ꠆
ꢎꢏ ꢐꢑꢒꢓ ꢔꢕꢖꢗ ꢘꢙꢚꢛ ꢜꢝꢞꢟ ꢠꢡꢢ꠆
ꢣꢤꢥ ꢦꢧꢨꢩ ꢪꢫꢬꢭ ꢮꢯꢰꢱ ꢲꢳꢴꢵ ꢶꢷꢸ꠆ 560
ꢹꢺꢻ ꢼꢽꢾꢿ ꣀꣁꣂ ꣃ꣄ꣅ ꣆꣇꣈ ꣉꣈꣊ ꣋꣌꣍꣈꣎꣈ ჼ Ჽ

"Tell me, young girl, what has happened to you without your being aware of it?
O guarded ship, where has your swift (prow) sunk?
And which sea snatched away your merchandise amidst its waves?
O enviable ewe, in which place did they take off your load (of treasure),
and once despoiled they dismissed and left you as it were in a desert?
O honourable dove, who has cut off the wings of your beauty
and plucked and carried off the sound feathers of your virginity?
O Chaste woman who has become flighty, who has seized your pearl,[53]
and damaged and snatched out the precious seals of your continence?
O Honourable on all days, when have you lost your honour?
And on which day did the band of robbers fall upon and seize your virtue?
O powerful city, which captor[54] has pulled down your fortification
and removed your booty with captives to the strangers?
O guarded field, who has thrown into you stolen seed?
because the heap of grain that is placed in the middle is not ours."

THE DISPUTATION BETWEEN MARY AND JOSEPH

Mary said: "It is enough Joseph, conclude your discourse.

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[53] 'pearl' here means 'virginity.' Ephrem describes 'virginity' as 'the greatest pearl,' cf. Ephrem, *HNat* 12:7; 16:12; *HVir* 1:3–6; 2:4,5. For the theme of the pearl in Jacob, see F. Graffin, "Le thème de la perle."

[54] In Bedjan's edition (Bedjan VI, 747, 18) the Syriac word given is *šebyā* which means 'captives.' But I presume that the correct word might be *šabāyā* meaning 'captor.'

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In all these matters I am not despicable, for my God testifies.
The pearl[55] is guarded in me and it is not stolen,
and the seal of virginity stands firm and no one has damaged it.
Seals of my maidenhood are preserved and I am assured;
and the door of the palace of my youthfulness is shut up and I am sealed.
No one has carried away that beryl that is betrothed to you
and the choice stone is not broken that was entrusted to you.
The fair crown of my youthfulness is preserved in its beauty.
That precious treasure of my virginity stands firm in me."
Joseph said: "Until now you were true
and about your chastity I have attested better than all.
About your continence all these days I have noted
and because in your virtue you were chaste, and I rejoiced much.
That no unfaithfulness has touched you, again I am testifying;
But to be convinced of these that you say, I am not willing.
It is befitting to accept deeds rather than words,
because that fact (of conception) stands by itself, it is not a matter for controversy.
The conception that is in your womb, behold, I am seeing indeed,
and how shall I be convinced of your entreaties? I do not know.
For, falsehood follows adultery
and calumny is joined with theft.
Any one who steals, is not truthful, by the fact that he is a thief

[55] See note 53.

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because a single evil is capable of generating many (evils).
Should I be convinced by your words[56] or should that conception of yours be believed by me?
Shall I have regard for your utterance or for the truth that is revealed and stands firm?"
The young girl speaks: "The signs of my virginity testify to my words
and that I have conceived is neither your affair nor mine.
That I am not to be despised in the presence of any man, is something true for me,
and that marital relation has never been encountered by me is without any doubt.
If you hold me to be false there are wise women in our place.
Also, with regard to me, there is the seal that belongs to women.
Give me to drink the water of trial for adulteress — Num 5:12–28
and according to the law that Moses has given test my continence.[57]
What further testimonies should I seek for you to persuade you, — Deut 22:5–30
apart from the signs of virginity and the waters of trial that are true for you?
And if you hold me as well as those things to be false, behold, my son will testify
that He is from above and I myself am not aware of any man." — Luke 1:32
Joseph said: "Who is able to be convinced of these things?
while a manifestation similar to this has never been seen."
Who has seen signs of virginity and conception in the same womb;

[56] Lit., 'your mouth.'

[57] Cf. Ephrem *HNat* 14:12–15; Ephrem's prose homily 'On Our Lord' (*Sermo de Domino nostro* 6) explains the origin of this test.

꠲꠳꠴꠵ ꠶꠷꠸ ꠹꠺ ꠻꠼꠽ ꠾꠿ꡀ ꡁꡂꡃ ꡄꡅꡆꡇ ꡈꡉꡊ ꡋꡌ:
ꡍꡎꡏꡐ ꡑꡒꡓ ꡔ ꡕꡖꡗꡘ ꡙꡚꡛ ꡜꡝꡞ ꡟꡠ꡽
ꡡꡢꡣ ꡤꡥꡦꡧ ꡨꡩꡪꡫ ꡬꡭꡮ ꡯꡰꡱꡲ ꡳ꡴꡵꡶:
꡷꡸꡹꡺ ꡻꡼꡽ ꡾꡿ ꢀꢁꢂ ꢃꢄꢅ ꢆꢇ ꢈꢉꢊ ꢋꢐ
ꢌꢍꢎꢏ ꢐꢑ ꢒꢓ ꢔꢕ ꢖꢗꢘ ꢙꢚꢛ ꢜꢝꢞ ꢟꢠ:
ꢡꢢꢣꢤ ꢥꢦꢧ ꢨꢩꢪ ꢫꢬꢭꢮ ꢯꢰꢱ ꢲꢳꢴ ꢵꢶꢷ ꢸꢹ꣄
ꢺꢻꢼꢽ ꢾꢿ ꣀꣁ ꣂꣃ꣄ ꣅ꣆ ꣇꣈ ꣉꣊ ꣋꣌ ꣍꣎ꣅ
ꣁꣂꣃ꣄ ꣅ꣆ ꣇꣈ ꣉꣊ ꣋꣌ ꣍꣎ꣅ ꣏ꣁ ꣐ꣂꣃ ꣑꣄ꣅ:
꣆꣇ ꣈꣉ ꣊꣋ ꣌꣍ ꣎ꣅ ꣏ꣁ ꣐ꣂꣃ ꣑꣄ꣅ ꣒꣆ ꣓꣇꣈꣉꣊꣋꣌꣍꣎ꣅ꣏ꣁ꣐ꣂꣃ꣑꣄ꣅ꣒꣆꣇꣈

the breasts full and the seals of virginity preserved?
Like guards the signs of virginity stand at the gate of the womb
and unless they have left no conception has entered and dwelt in the womb.
[Joseph] "This has altogether not been heard of with women,
that without a man there should be an offspring for virgins.
Where and when or with whom has it ever been achieved?
It is hard for me to be convinced about this vision which I have heard from you.
While neither Scripture nor Nature teaches this,
how is it possible in your case for it to happen against (normal) custom?"

SCRIPTURAL AND NATURAL TESTIMONIES FOR MARY'S VIRGINITY

Mary said: "If you seek testimony for my words
it is easy for you to hear both from Nature and from Scripture[58]

Who was united (in marriage) to the virgin earth that gave birth to Adam	Gen 2:7
and even Adam, with whom was he joined for the birth of Eve?	Gen 2:20–23
Who was united (in marriage) with the tree when it gave birth to the lamb	Gen 22:13[59]
or who knew the rock when it gave birth to rivers?	Exod 17:5–7
By what spirit did the staff sprout forth in an unusual manner?[60]	Judg 15:15–19
or by what marital union did a lifeless jawbone bring out water?	

[58] According to the law testimonies of two witnesses are believable and valid; See Deut 19:15; John 8:17; Matt 18:16. Here the Nature and the Scripture serve as two witnesses; cf. Ephrem *HPar* 5:2.

[59] *Nat* III, 119–20, below.

[60] Lit., 'outside the custom'; Cf. Num 17:8; Heb 9:4.

ﺃَﻣِﻦْ ﻧُﻬَﻮْﺍ ﺣُﺠَّﺔَ ﷲِ ﻣُﻌَﻠَّﻖَ ﻗَﻠْﺒِﻪِ ﻗَﻬُﻮﺍ:
ﻭَﻟَﺎ ﻋَﻨَّﻪ ﻟَﺎ ﺗَﻠَﻪ ﻗَﻬِﻨَﺎ ﻗَﻌِﻨَﺎ ﻗَﻨَّﻪُﻩ
ﻫُﻮَﺍ ﻛَﻠَﻤُﻪ ﷲِ ﺃَﻌَﻠَّﻤَﻨَﺎ ﻣِﻦ ﺗَﻘَﻠُﻪُﺍ:
ﻭَﻟَﺎ ﻛَﻠِﻤَﺎﺕُ ﷲِ ﺗَﺒَﺪَّﻟَﻪ ﻛَﻠَّﻤَﻨَﺎ ﻛَﻠَّﻤَﻨَﺎﻩُ
ﺃَﻣَﺎ ﻫَﺎﻫُﻨَﺎ ﺃَﻥ ﻣِﻦ ﻫَﻨَّﻪ ﻫَﻨَّﻤَﻪ ﺃَﻌَﻠَّﻤَﻨَﺎ:
ﻛَﻠَّﻤَﻨَﺎ ﻛَﻠِﻤَﺎﺕُ ﷲِ ﻣُﺘَﻤَّﻤَﻪ ﻣُﺘَﻤَّﻤَﻪ ﻣُﺘَﻤَّﻤَﻪ
ﻣِﻦ ﻟَﺎ ﻣَﻠَﻜَﺎ ﺃَﻫَﻠَﺎ ﻣَﻠَﻜَﺎ ﻫُﻮَﺍ:
ﺃَﻣَﻦ ﻣُﺘَﻤَّﻤَﻪ ﻫُﺮَﻣَﺎ ﻭَﻟَﺎ ﻛَﻠَﻤَﺎ
ﺃَﻫَﻨَﺎ ﻫَﻨَّﻢَ ﺃَﻥ ﻫُﻮَﻫَﺎﻫُﻨَﺎ ﻛَﻠَّﻜَﻢ ﻛَﻠَّﻤَﻪ:
ﻣُﻤَﻤَّﻪ ﻫَّﻪ ﻭَﻟَﻤَّﻪ ﺃَﻩ ﻫَﻠَﻤَﺎ ﺃَﻩ ﻫَﻠَﻤَﺎ
ﻫَﻢ ﺃَﻫَﻠَّﻨَﺎ ﻟَﻠَﻨَﺎ ﻛَﻠَّﻤَﻨَﺎ ﻛَﻠَّﻤَﻪ ﻟَﻠَﻢ:
ﻫَﻢ ﺃَﻫَﻠَّﻨَﺎ ﻛَﻢ ﺃَﻜَﻠَّﻨَﺎ ﻩَﻠَﻜَﻪ ﺃَﻫَﻨَﺎ:
ﺃَﻩ ﻫَﻢ ﻣُﻤَﻤَّﻪ ﻛَﻠَّﻤَﻨَﺎ ﻣُﻜَﻠَّﻤَﻪ ﻫَﻠَّﻤَﻨَﺎﻩُ
ﻛَﻠَﻤَﺎ ﺀَﻣَﻠَ ﺃَﻫَﻨَّ ﻣَﻜَﻠَّﻨَﺎ ﻭَﻟَﺎ ﻛَﻠَﻤَﺎ:
ﻩَﻜَﻠَﻤَﺎ ﺗَﻤَّﻨَﺎ ﺃَﻫَﻨَّ ﻣَﻤَﻠَ ﻗَﻨَﺎ ﻣَﻠَﻨَﺎﻩُ
ﻫَﻜَﻢ ﺗَﻠَّﻨَﺎ ﻫَﻨَّﻪ ﺃَﻫَﻨَّ ﻫُﻜَﻢ ﺗَﻠَّﻨَﺎ:

In these wombs who has generated these offsprings,
for, is this alone, that which happened in me, untrue?
And if you are not convinced by nature, although it is very much true,
Scripture too will not be able to teach you by its secrets.[61]
Read in the prophets and see the story that resembles mine.
There are many things to be found in all the books.[62]
Indeed, have you not heard from Isaiah when he proclaimed, Isa 7:14; Matt 1:23
'Behold, a virgin shall conceive and give birth to Immanuel'?
Is this saying true for you or is it false?
Has it been believed by you or is there still suspicion in your mind?"
Joseph said: "There is suspicion regarding you on account of two things.
It is also truly right for me to flee from you.
If your conception is from adultery, God forbid! that in future
I should mix my purity with a body that has committed fornication with strangers.
And if your offspring is from the Spirit, I do not venture
to approach the pure castle, in which the King has resided.
I do not investigate what your conception is or from whom it is
because even should I search it out the (same) end result would happen to me.
Whether from adultery or from the Spirit, it is an object of terror for me
and why therefore should I debate many things with you?"
This thought carried the just one to leave Mary

[61] Ephrem, *HAzym* 4:24.
[62] 'books' here refers to the Scriptures.

ꠢꠣꠀꠀ ꠞꠣꠢꠤꠢ ꠀꠣꠢꠣ ꠀꠣꠀ ꠞꠣꠢꠤꠢ꠆
ꠣꠀ ꠞꠣꠢꠤꠀ ꠀꠣ ꠢꠣꠢ ꠇꠀ ꠞꠣꠢꠤꠢꠉ
ꠀꠣꠀꠀ ꠢꠣꠀꠀ ꠣꠀ ꠢꠣꠢꠤꠀ ꠞꠣꠢ ꠢꠣꠢꠤꠀ꠆
650 ꠢꠣꠢ ꠞꠣꠢꠤꠀ ꠢꠣꠢ ꠞꠣꠢꠤꠢ ꠢꠣꠢꠤꠀꠉ
139 ꠢꠣꠢꠤꠢ ꠀꠣꠢ ꠞꠣꠢꠤꠀꠀ ꠢꠣꠢꠤꠢ꠆
ꠀꠣ ꠢꠣꠢꠤꠀ ꠞꠣꠢ ꠇꠀ ꠢꠣꠢꠤꠢ ꠇꠀ ꠢꠣꠢꠤꠢꠉ
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ꠞꠣꠢꠤꠢ ꠞꠣꠢ ꠇꠀ ꠢꠣꠢ ꠀꠣꠀ ꠇꠣꠢꠉ
655 ꠀꠣꠢꠤꠀ ꠞꠣꠢ ꠀꠣ ꠢꠣꠢꠤꠢ ꠢꠣꠢꠤꠀ ꠀꠣꠢ꠆
ꠀꠣꠢꠤꠢ ꠢꠣꠢꠤꠢ ꠢꠣꠢꠤꠀ ꠇꠣꠢ ꠢꠣꠢꠤꠢ ꠀꠣꠢꠤꠀꠉ
ꠣꠀ ꠀꠣꠢ ꠞꠣꠢ ꠢꠣꠢꠤꠢ ꠢꠣꠢꠤꠢ ꠞꠣꠢꠤꠢ꠆
ꠀꠣ ꠢꠣꠢ ꠞꠣꠢꠤꠀ ꠢꠣꠢꠤꠢ ꠢꠣꠢ ꠞꠣꠢ ꠢꠣꠢꠉ
ꠀꠣꠢꠤꠢ ꠀꠣꠢ ꠞꠣꠢꠤꠀ ꠢꠣꠢꠤꠢ ꠀꠣꠢꠤꠀ ꠀꠣꠢ꠆
660 ꠣꠀ ꠢꠣꠢ ꠀꠣꠢꠤꠀ ꠢꠣꠢꠤꠢ ꠀꠣꠢꠤꠀ ꠀꠣꠢꠉ
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ꠀꠣ ꠢꠣꠢꠤꠀ ꠀꠣꠢ ꠢꠣꠢꠤꠢ ꠀꠣ ꠢꠣꠢꠉ
ꠀꠣꠢ ꠢꠣ ꠀꠣꠢꠤꠢ ꠢꠣꠢꠤꠢ ꠢꠣꠢꠤꠢ ꠞꠣꠢ꠆
665 ꠣꠢꠣꠢ ꠢꠣꠢꠤꠀ ꠀꠣꠢꠤꠀ ꠢꠣꠢꠤꠢ ꠀꠣꠢꠉ
ꠀꠣꠢ ꠀꠣꠢ ꠞꠣꠢꠤꠀ ꠢꠣꠢꠤꠢ ꠀꠣꠢꠤꠀ ꠢꠣꠢꠤꠢ꠆
ꠣꠢꠣꠢꠤꠢ ꠢꠣꠢ ꠢꠣꠢꠤꠢ ꠢꠣ ꠢꠣꠢꠤꠢ ꠞꠣꠢꠤꠢꠉ

and the destitute woman became clothed in suffering concerning her separation.

MARY'S SUPPLICATION TO THE SON

With sighing utterances she whispered to her Son gently
and with prayers she spoke to Him mournfully.
She turned her eyes towards her womb discerningly,
having fixed her eyes on her womb affectionately.
"O True One, for whom I am calumniated, manifest your truth;
let the truth of your mother be not hidden from the needy ones.
Reveal your action to the foster father whom you have there for you on earth,
lest he be alienated from the mystery of your nativity.
O Merciful One, merciful as you are, have pity on his righteousness
and with your revelation let his heart rejoice and let him forget his suffering.
My Son, do not hide your conception from him so that he may not perish,
defend your mother so that he may not be in doubt.
My Lord, let me not turn to marriage, I am persistent.
Regarding his righteousness I am much solicitous so that he might be sanctified with me.
And because you have made me worthy as his spouse to receive you, make him also worthy
so that he should approach your nativity full of holiness.
Do not again abandon him to be tormented by scandal on account of your conception.
Make him reach the haven of your faith,[63] full of hope.
Be a true witness to your mother whom they have much slandered.

[63] Mary prays that Joseph may reach 'the faith in Christ' that saves.

Convince Joseph, and he will (then) convince on my behalf the one who is doubting.
If he will be convinced, it will be easy for him to reprove the person who falsely accuses me,
and he will proclaim the truth about your birth all days of his life."

THE ENCOUNTER BETWEEN THE ANGEL AND JOSEPH

And when the thoughts have carried Joseph that what he should do,
he was immersed in sleep because he had been doubtful in (his) worry.
And while during the sleep of the still night the just one rested himself,
the Son of the Virgin made a sign to the watcher and he came towards him.
The ambassador who had brought the good news to the womb of His mother descended
to reveal the mystery to Joseph the husband of the believing woman.
The herald came to manifest the truth to the one who doubted
and to explain to him the revealed truth in a hidden vision.
The spiritual one flew and reached him swiftly
to drive away all doubtful thoughts from him.
In the vision of the night he approached towards him kindly
so that in fright and with caution he might accept his words.
A perturbing appearance, glorious and amazing, did he reveal and made manifest to him
so that he might fearfully hear the truth from him.
He blew like wind and flew on high like lightning and reached him.
He was inflamed like fire, resounded like thunder and spoke with him.
He became a man and brought forth lightnings from his flame.

ꠔ ꠕꠖ ꠗꠘ ꠙꠚꠛ ꠜꠝ ꠞꠟꠠ ꠡꠢꠣ ꠤꠥ:
ꠦꠧ꠨ ꠩꠪꠫꠬ ꠭꠮꠯꠰ ꠱꠲꠳ ꠴꠵꠶ ꠷꠸꠹ ꠺꠻꠼ ꠽꠾꠿
690 ꡀꡁꡂ ꡃꡄꡅꡆ ꡇꡈꡉꡊ ꡋꡌꡍꡎ ꡏꡐꡑꡒ:
ꡓꡔꡕ ꡖꡗꡘꡙ ꡚꡛꡜꡝ ꡞꡟꡠꡡ ꡢꡣꡤꡥ ꡦꡧꡨꡩ ꡪꡫꡬꡭ
141 ꡮꡯꡰ ꡱꡲꡳ꡴ ꡵꡶꡷꡸ ꡹꡺꡻꡼ ꡽꡾꡿ ꢀꢁꢂ ꢃꢄꢅꢆ:
ꢇꢈꢉ ꢊꢋꢌꢍ ꢎꢏꢐꢑ ꢒꢓꢔꢕ ꢖꢗꢘꢙ ꢚꢛꢜꢝ ꢞꢟꢠꢡ ꢢꢣꢤꢥ
ꢦꢧꢨ ꢩꢪꢫꢬ ꢭꢮꢯꢰ ꢱꢲꢳꢴ ꢵꢶꢷꢸ ꢹꢺꢻꢼ ꢽꢾꢿꣀ
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705 ꦁꦂꦃ ꦄꦅꦆꦇ ꦈꦉꦊꦋ ꦌꦍꦎꦏ ꦐꦑꦒꦓ ꦔꦕꦖꦗ
ꦘꦙꦚꦛ ꦜꦝꦞꦟ ꦠꦡꦢꦣ ꦤꦥꦦꦧ ꦨꦩꦪꦫ
ꦬꦭꦮ ꦯꦰꦱꦲ ꦳ꦴꦵꦶ ꦷꦸꦹꦺ ꦻꦼꦽꦾ ꦿ꧀ꦁꦂ

He shone forth like sun and filled the house with his flashing light.
The light of flame flashed out and Joseph was shaken.
He opened his mouth and burning coals showered down from his lips.
He stretched out his wings and the house became clothed in a cloud of fire
and he began to speak and the just one trembled on his bed.
He called and said to him: "O son of David, do not be in doubt." Matt 1:20
At the beginning of his phrase he gave the crown to him, seeing that he is the son of David.
He called him 'son of David' indicating to him that he might understand Gen 49:10
that from the house of David there would shine forth the King of whom Jacob had written.
"If your betrothed Mary is from the tribe of Reuben is Gen 35:23; Num 1:20–21
it not true that her conception is without any man.
If from Simeon or from Levi is her tribe Exod 1:2
neither among them stands the Prince of whom it is written that he will come. Gen 49:10; Matt 2:6
If from Judah or from the household of David is her lineage
from her will shine forth the One to whom belongs the government. Isa 9:6
Do not be alarmed or doubtfully afraid of her
because the one who dwells in her is truly the Son of the Exalted One.
As it is announced, her conception is not from adultery
because the offspring from her is the One who removes the earth's adultery.
This, which has happened is what Isaiah too proclaimed: Isa 7:14
'Behold a virgin shall conceive and give birth to Immanuel.'
If that had not happened as it was delineated,
Isaiah himself too would be false in his proclamation.
Behold, in truth, in your betrothed is Immanuel

꠲꠳꠴ ꠵꠶꠷꠸ ꠹꠺꠻꠼꠽꠾ ꠿ꡀꡁꡂ ꡃꡄꡅ:
ꡆꡇ ꡈꡉꡊ ꡋꡌꡍ ꡎꡏꡐ ꡑꡒꡓ ꡔꡕ ꡖꡗꡘ꠆
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ꢯꢰ ꢱꢲꢳ ꢴꢵꢶ ꢷꢸꢹ ꢺꢻꢼ ꢽꢾꢿ ꢀꢁꢂ꠆
ꢃꢄ ꢅꢆꢇ ꢈꢉꢊ ꢋꢌꢍ ꢎꢏꢐ ꢑꢒꢓ:
ꢔꢕ ꢖꢗꢘ ꢙꢚꢛ ꢜꢝꢞ ꢟꢠꢡ ꢢꢣꢤ ꢥ꠆
ꢦꢧ ꢨꢩꢪ ꢫꢬꢭ ꢮꢯꢰ ꢱꢲꢳ ꢴꢵꢶ: 720
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꣈꣊ ꣋꣌ ꣍꣎ ꣏꣐꣑ ꣒ ꣓꣔ ꣕꣖꣗ ꣘꣙꣚ ꣛꣜꣝꠆
꣞ ꣟꣠꣡ ꣢꣣꣤ ꣥꣦꣧ ꣨ ꣩꣪ ꣫꣬꣭ ꣮꣯꣰:
꣱ꣲ ꣳꣴ ꣵꣶ ꣷ꣸ ꣹꣺ ꣻ꣼ ꣽꣾ ꣿ꠆
꤀ ꤁꤂ ꤃꤄꤅ ꤆꤇ ꤈꤉ ꤊꤋ ꤌꤍ ꤎꤏ ꤐꤑ: 725
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ꤥꤦ ꤧꤨ ꤩꤪ ꤫ ꤬꤭ ꤮꤯ ꤰꤱ ꤲꤳ ꤴꤵ:
ꤶꤷ ꤸꤹꤺ ꤻꤼꤽ ꤾꤿ ꥀꥁ ꥂꥃꥄ ꥅꥆ ꥇꥈ꠆
ꥉꥊ ꥋꥌ ꥍ ꥎꥏ ꥐꥑ ꥒ꥓ ꥔꥕:
꥖꥗ ꥘꥙ ꥚꥛ ꥜꥝ ꥞ ꥟ꥠ ꥡꥢ ꥣꥤ ꥥ꠆
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ꦈꦉ ꦊꦋꦌ ꦍꦎꦏ ꦐ ꦑꦒꦓ ꦔꦕꦖ ꦗꦘ ꦙꦚ꠆

because His is the power, and its [Immanuel] explanation is, 'Our Lord is with us'.
Behold, God is united with man as it was proclaimed
'God is with you', as it was sung, yet you are complaining."

BELIEVING JOSEPH, THE HERALD OF THE TRUTH OF NATIVITY

The watcher departed and Joseph was awakened and terrified,
fearing, trembling, amazed, shaken, astonished, and afraid.
He was agitated, alarmed, assured, confessing, afraid, rejoicing,
confident, strengthened, glorifying, confessing, blessing, and adoring.
He saw the virgin, he folded his hands and prostrated before her.
"Peace be with you, the mother of the King who has come to our world.
I am adoring the womb, the conveyance of the Lord of Kings.
I am believing you, young girl, who carries the Lord of truth.
Because that One who dwells in you is the Lord of the watchers, as I testify,
and the orders of fiery ones obey Him because He is the Son of God.
Also I imagine that it is hidden from you how much He is powerful.
I have indeed learned many things in great fear.
For, that one who is in your womb is in truth Immanuel.
Isaiah too prophesied about Him in his proclamation.
A servant of your Son announced all these things in my ears.
The archangel is a household member of His and he has demonstrated to me.
Now that I have learned, I will not cease from His praise.

: 143
735 ꡏꡐꡑ ꡒꡓꡔꡕ ꡖꡗꡘꡙ ꡚꡛꡜꡝ ꡞꡟꡠ ꡡꡢꡣꡤꡥ ꡦꡰ
ꡧꡨꡩꡪꡫꡬꡭꡮ ꡯꡰꡱꡲꡳ꡴꡵꡶ ꡷꡸꡹꡺꡻꡼꡽:
꡾꡿ꢀꢁꢂꢃꢄꢅ ꢆꢇꢈꢉꢊꢋꢌꢍ ꢎꢏꢐꢑꢒꢓꢔꢕ ꢖꢗꢘꢙꢚꢛꢜꢝ ꢞ꣸
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740 ꣀꣁꣂ ꣃ꣄ꣅ꣆꣇꣈ ꣉꣋꣌꣍꣎꣏꣐ ꣑꣒ꣳ꣓ꣴ꣕꣖꣗꣘꣙:
꣚꣛ ꣜꣝ ꣞꣟ ꣠꣡꣢꣣ ꣤ꣳ ꣥ꣳ ꣦ꣳ ꣧ꣳ ꣨꣩ꣳ ꣪ꣳ ꣫ꣳ ꣬ꣳ ꣭ꣳ ꣮ꣳ ꣯ꣳ ꣰꣱ꣳ ꣲꣳ ꣳ ꣴꣵꣳ ꣶꣳ ꣷꣳ ꣸꣹ꣳ ꣺ꣳ ꣻꣳ ꣼ꣽꣳ ꣾꣳ ꣿꣳ ꤀꤁ꣳ ꤂꤃ꣳ ꤄꤅ꣳ ꤆꤇ꣳ ꤈꤉ꣳ ꤊꤋꣳ ꤌꤍꣳ ꤎꤏꣳ ꤐꤑꣳ ꤒꤓꣳ ꤔꤕꣳ ꤖꤗꣳ ꤘꤙꣳ ꤚꤛꣳ ꤜꤝꣳ ꤞꤟꣳ ꤠꤡꣳ ꤢꤣꣳ ꤤꤥꣳ ꤦꤧꣳ ꤨꤩꣳ ꤪ꤫ꣳ ꤬꤭ꣳ ꤮꤯ꣳ ꤰꤱꣳ ꤲꤳꣳ ꤴꤵꣳ ꤶꤷꣳ ꤸꤹꣳ ꤺꤻꣳ ꤼꤽꣳ ꤾꤿꣳ ꥀꥁꣳ ꥂꥃꣳ ꥄꥅꣳ ꥆꥇꣳ ꥈꥉꣳ ꥊꥋꣳ ꥌꥍꣳ ꥎꥏꣳ ꥐꥑꣳ ꥒ꥓ꣳ ꥔꥕ꣳ ꥖꥗ꣳ ꥘꥙ꣳ ꥚꥛ꣳ ꥜꥝ꣳ ꥞꥟ꣳ ꥠꥡꣳ ꥢꥣꣳ ꥤꥥꣳ ꥦꥧꣳ ꥨꥩꣳ ꥪꥫꣳ ꥬꥭꣳ ꥮꥯꣳ ꥰꥱꣳ ꥲꥳꣳ ꥴꥵꣳ ꥶꥷꣳ ꥸꥹꣳ ꥺꥻꣳ ꥼ꥽ꣳ ꥾꥿ꣳ ꦀꦁꣳ ꦂꦃꣳ ꦄꦅꣳ ꦆꦇꣳ ꦈꦉꣳ ꦊꦋꣳ ꦌꦍꣳ ꦎꦏꣳ ꦐꦑꣳ ꦒꦓꣳ ꦔꦕꣳ ꦖꦗꣳ ꦘꦙꣳ ꦚꦛꣳ ꦜꦝꣳ ꦞꦟꣳ ꦠꦡꣳ ꦢꦣꣳ ꦤꦥꣳ ꦦꦧꣳ ꦨꦩꣳ ꦪꦫꣳ ꦬꦭꣳ ꦮꦯꣳ ꦰꦱꣳ ꦲ꦳ꣳ ꦴꦵꣳ ꦶꦷꣳ ꦸꦹꣳ ꦺꦻꣳ ꦼꦽꣳ ꦾꦿꣳ ꧀ꣳ ꧁ꣳ ꧂ꣳ ꧄ꣳ ꧅ꣳ ꧆ꣳ ꧈ꣳ ꧊ꣳ ꧋ꣳ ꧌ꣳ ꧍ꣳ ꧏꣳ ꧐ꣳ ꧑ꣳ ꧒ꣳ ꧓ꣳ ꧔ꣳ ꧕ꣳ ꧖ꣳ ꧗ꣳ ꧘ꣳ ꧙ꣳ ꧚ꣳ ꧛ꣳ ꧜ꣳ ꧝ꣳ ꧞ꣳ ꧟ꣳ ꧠꣳ ꧡꣳ ꧢꣳ ꧣꣳ ꧤꣳ ꧥꣳ ꧦꣳ ꧧꣳ ꧨꣳ ꧩꣳ ꧪꣳ ꧫꣳ ꧬꣳ ꧭꣳ ꧮꣳ ꧯꣳ ꧰ꣳ ꧱ꣳ ꧲ꣳ ꧳ꣳ ꧴ꣳ ꧵ꣳ ꧶ꣳ ꧷ꣳ ꧸ꣳ ꧹ꣳ ꧺꣳ ꧻꣳ ꧼꣳ ꧽꣳ ꧾꣳ ꧿ꣳ ꨀꨁꣳ ꨂꨃꣳ ꨄꨅꣳ ꨆꨇꣳ ꨈꨉꣳ ꨊꨋꣳ ꨌꨍꣳ ꨎꨏꣳ ꨐꨑꣳ ꨒꨓꣳ ꨔꨕꣳ ꨖꨗꣳ ꨘꨙꣳ ꨚꨛꣳ ꨜꨝꣳ ꨞꨟꣳ ꨠꨡꣳ ꨢꨣꣳ ꨤꨥꣳ ꨦꨧꣳ ꨨꨩꣳ ꨪꨫꣳ ꨬꨭꣳ ꨮꨯꣳ ꨰꨱꣳ ꨲꨳꣳ ꨴꨵꣳ ꨶ꨷ꣳ ꨸꨹ꣳ ꨺꨻ꣳ ꨼꨽ꣳ ꨾꨿ꣳ ꩀꩁꣳ ꩂꩃꣳ ꩄꩅꣳ ꩆꩇꣳ ꩈꩉꣳ ꩊꩋꣳ ꩌꩍꣳ ꩎꩏ꣳ ꩐꩑ꣳ ꩒꩓ꣳ ꩔꩕ꣳ ꩖꩗ꣳ ꩘꩙ꣳ ꩚꩛ꣳ ꩜꩝ꣳ ꩞꩟ꣳ ꩠꩡꣳ ꩢꩣꣳ ꩤꩥꣳ ꩦꩧꣳ ꩨꩩꣳ ꩪꩫꣳ ꩬꩭꣳ ꩮꩯꣳ ꩰꩱꣳ ꩲꩳꣳ ꩴꩵꣳ ꩶ꩷ꣳ ꩸꩹ꣳ ꩺꩻꣳ ꩼꩽꣳ ꩾꩿꣳ ꪀꪁꣳ ꪂꪃꣳ ꪄꪅꣳ ꪆꪇꣳ ꪈꪉꣳ ꪊꪋꣳ ꪌꪍꣳ ꪎꪏꣳ ꪐꪑꣳ ꪒꪓꣳ ꪔꪕꣳ ꪖꪗꣳ ꪘꪙꣳ ꪚꪛꣳ ꪜꪝꣳ ꪞꪟꣳ ꪠꪡꣳ ꪢꪣꣳ ꪤꪥꣳ ꪦꪧꣳ ꪨꪩꣳ ꪪꪫꣳ ꪬꪭꣳ 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I would become a herald of truth for Him among the calumniators.
And because I doubted a little while concerning your conception,
my tongue will proclaim all my life long the truth of your offspring.
Because in suspicion I had wanted to dismiss you on account of your offspring,
not even by the sword would I abandon your holiness.
Because then I thought of you as a married woman in adultery;
me, God forbid, that I should turn to marital union that is far off from you.
Come, enter and be the mistress of the habitation of your virginity
and while I rejoice I will minister to your holiness.
Behold, from today I have dismissed from my mind (the idea of) marital union,
and to your purity I am submitting myself because your Son is my Lord."

JOSEPH, THE CHERUB OF FLESH AND THE VIRTUOUS SERVANT

Joseph led the believing woman and she entered with him,
and the virgin lived with the holy man in continence.
He was serving and adoring and honouring her and being glad before her,
extolling, confessing and serving her in a holy manner.
Holding back in awe from her while hearing her prudently,
his body is sanctified and his heart shining together with its thoughts.[64]
The carpenter became a Cherub of flesh for the Artificer of the universe,

[64] It is relevant to bear in mind that according to Syriac understanding, and especially for Jacob, heart is the seat of thinking; cf. Bedjan III, p. 114, 7–115, 4.

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and with virtue he took up the service in great fear.
Seraphs veil themselves and sanctify the hidden Son,
and among the poor He dwelt in the young girl like all (other) infants.
Heaven is too small to be sufficient to carry His hidden nature,
but a solitary woman escorts and carries His magnificence.
Among the fiery ones He is hidden in His being from all the (heavenly) ranks;
But the household of Joseph is enriched by Him and is held in honour because of Him.
With His Sender He is hidden from the watchers in His great place
but among the poor He dwells in the young girl as an infant.
And even while He grows up, He causes new born babes to grow up in wombs;
for, He fashions and imprints rational images in married women.
And while the full crown of His corporeality was perfected
and the crown of the members of His magnificence was brought to completion,
And when He had gathered the body with its senses in rationality
and prepared and perfected the complete state of His body with all its forms,
And when He had framed the whole of its image with sense perception
and engraved the seal of the complete man skilfully,
And when the edifice of His flesh was perfected spiritually
and the structure of His corporeality stood ready in abundance,
And when He had accomplished the full measure of nine months,

ꠀꠃꠇꠀꠎ ꠀꠎꠀꠃꠀꠎ ꠀꠎꠀꠃꠀꠎ ꠀꠃꠇꠀꠎ 770
ꠀꠎꠀꠃꠀꠎ ꠀꠎꠀꠃꠀꠎ ꠀꠎꠀꠃꠀꠎ ꠀꠃꠇꠀꠎ
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ꠀꠎꠀꠃꠀꠎ ꠀꠎꠀꠃꠀꠎ ꠀꠎꠀꠃꠀꠎ ꠀꠃꠇꠀꠎ 785
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ꠀꠎꠀꠃꠀꠎ ꠀꠎꠀꠃꠀꠎ ꠀꠎꠀꠃꠀꠎ ꠀꠃꠇꠀꠎ

the Begetter of Adam wished to come into birth in due order.

THE INSCRIPTION OF THE NAME OF ADAM IN THE BOOK OF LIFE

And when He wanted to write down Adam in the book of life,
the command went out that people should be registered in the census. Luke 2:1
The commands became thronged together, one from the height and the other from the depth
because two kings in the two places were going to enumerate people.
Caesar writes men in the human census
but the Son inscribes the offspring of Adam in the book of life.[65] Ps 87:6[66]
One devises how men should be in debt to him,
but the other is solicitous to acquit the debtors.
They came across each other, the eloquent books of two kings
because they wrote the names, the king on earth and the Son in heaven.
That command of the census was the first,
as though a novelty that happened to humanity.
Through the revealed things the concealed things too are signified;
and through the visible things the hidden things too are proclaimed.[67]
While the enumeration of men came close to servitude,
their liberation was again written down by the Exalted One.
The commandment was issued that everyone should inscribe his name in his own country. Luke 2:3

[65] Cf. Ephrem *HNat* 18:2; *Epiph* 2:2.

[66] Ephrem *HNat* 1:3; 5:12.

[67] Bedjan I, p. 456 (Hom. 18, on Palm Sunday, line 202; ET in MHMJS 3); Ephrem, *HFid* 76:11–12; *HAzym* 4:1–7.

790 ꠀꠣꠞ ꠣꠎꠀ ꠢꠤꠀ ꠢꠞꠤꠀꠣ ꠤꠤꠢꠞ ꠎꠞꠞ:
ꠞꠣꠞ ꠣꠥꠀꠢꠤ ꠢꠞꠤꠀꠣ ꠢꠤꠀ ꠎꠞꠞꠞ ꠢꠞꠞ ꠢꠤꠀ ꠎꠞꠞ:
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ꠢꠤꠀ ꠣꠥꠀꠢꠤ ꠢꠞꠤꠀꠣ ꠢꠤꠀ ꠎꠞꠞꠞ ꠢꠞꠞ ꠢꠤꠀ ꠎꠞꠞ:
795 ꠀꠣꠞ ꠣꠥꠀꠢꠤ ꠢꠞꠤꠀꠣ ꠢꠤꠀ ꠎꠞꠞꠞ ꠢꠞꠞ ꠢꠤꠀ ꠎꠞꠞ:
ꠢꠤꠀ ꠣꠥꠀꠢꠤ ꠢꠞꠤꠀꠣ ꠢꠤꠀ ꠎꠞꠞꠞ ꠢꠞꠞ ꠢꠤꠀ ꠎꠞꠞ:
146 ꠀꠣꠞ ꠣꠥꠀꠢꠤ ꠢꠞꠤꠀꠣ ꠢꠤꠀ ꠎꠞꠞꠞ ꠢꠞꠞ ꠢꠤꠀ ꠎꠞꠞ:
ꠢꠤꠀ ꠣꠥꠀꠢꠤ ꠢꠞꠤꠀꠣ ꠢꠤꠀ ꠎꠞꠞꠞ ꠢꠞꠞ ꠢꠤꠀ ꠎꠞꠞ:
ꠢꠤꠀ ꠣꠥꠀꠢꠤ ꠢꠞꠤꠀꠣ ꠢꠤꠀ ꠎꠞꠞꠞ ꠢꠞꠞ ꠢꠤꠀ ꠎꠞꠞ:
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ꠢꠤꠀ ꠣꠥꠀꠢꠤ ꠢꠞꠤꠀꠣ ꠢꠤꠀ ꠎꠞꠞꠞ ꠢꠞꠞ ꠢꠤꠀ ꠎꠞꠞ:
ꠢꠤꠀ ꠣꠥꠀꠢꠤ ꠢꠞꠤꠀꠣ ꠢꠤꠀ ꠎꠞꠞꠞ ꠢꠞꠞ ꠢꠤꠀ ꠎꠞꠞ:
ꠢꠤꠀ ꠣꠥꠀꠢꠤ ꠢꠞꠤꠀꠣ ꠢꠤꠀ ꠎꠞꠞꠞ ꠢꠞꠞ ꠢꠤꠀ ꠎꠞꠞ:
805 ꠀꠣꠞ ꠣꠥꠀꠢꠤ ꠢꠞꠤꠀꠣ ꠢꠤꠀ ꠎꠞꠞꠞ ꠢꠞꠞ ꠢꠤꠀ ꠎꠞꠞ:
ꠞꠣꠞ ꠣꠥꠀꠢꠤ ꠢꠞꠤꠀꠣ ꠢꠤꠀ ꠎꠞꠞꠞ ꠢꠞꠞ ꠢꠤꠀ ꠎꠞꠞ:
ꠢꠤꠀ ꠣꠥꠀꠢꠤ ꠢꠞꠤꠀꠣ ꠢꠤꠀ ꠎꠞꠞꠞ ꠢꠞꠞ ꠢꠤꠀ ꠎꠞꠞ:

Therefore, for Adam, He [Christ] inscribed his [Adam's name] in Eden, for it is his country.
In the garden of bliss, the city of the races, his Lord wrote his (name).
In his first country, among his acquaintances, He wrote down his name.
And when from heaven this sign was sent out
Caesar had commanded that this too should come to pass on earth.[68]
Let everyone go to his city and to his village,
a symbol of the return, because the expelled one was to be returned to Eden.

THE WONDER OF 'THE BEGETTER OF BABES' BEGOTTEN CORPOREALLY

And while the commandment had dominion in the land of Judea,
as all the people were inscribed in census,
The invigilators approached also to Joseph, the husband of Mary,
so that he should go up and provide the inscription of his name in the town of David. Luke 2:4ff
He led her, the fullness of the beauties of virginity, and came
and ascended to go to write down his name according to the command.
The King had gone up to the town of the kings to shine forth there
and to inscribe mankind in the book of life through his birth.
The young girl carried the Lord of kings in her pure womb Mic 5:2[69]
and she travelled, and ascended with Joseph to Ephrathah.
And when they had arrived at the place of the king, He knew His own,

[68] Narsai finds the earthly king's order for the census as a type of the power of the King on high, cf. *PO* 40, pp. 52/53 (lines 235–246).

[69] Ephrem, *HNat* 1:4–7.

ꠔꠕꠖ ꠗꠘꠙꠚ ꠛꠜꠝꠞꠟꠠ ꠡꠢꠣꠤꠥ ꠦꠧ꠨꠩:
꠪꠫꠬꠭ ꠮꠯꠰꠱ ꠲꠳꠴꠵꠶ ꠷꠸꠹꠺ ꠻꠼꠽꠾꠿ ꡀꡁꡂꡃ꡵
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ꡔꡕꡖꡗ ꡘꡙꡚꡛ ꡜꡝꡞꡟ ꡠꡡꡢꡣ ꡤꡥꡦꡧ꡵
ꡨꡩꡪꡫ ꡬꡭꡮꡯ ꡰꡱꡲꡳ ꡴꡵꡶꡷ ꡸꡹꡺꡻꡵
꡼꡽꡾꡿ ꢀꢁꢂꢃ ꢄꢅꢆꢇ ꢈꢉꢊꢋ ꢌꢍꢎꢏ:
ꢐꢑ ꢒꢓꢔꢕ ꢖꢗꢘꢙ ꢚꢛꢜꢝ ꢞꢟꢠꢡ꡵
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꣆꣇꣈꣉ ꣊꣋꣌꣍ ꣎꣏꣐꣑ ꣒꣓꣔꣕ ꣖꣗꣘꣙꣚:
꣛꣜꣝ ꣞꣟꣠꣡ ꣢꣣꣤꣥ ꣦꣧꣨꣩ ꣪ꣳ꣫ꣲ꣭ꣴ꡵
ꣵꣶꣷ꣸ ꣹꣺ꣻ꣼ ꣽꣾꣿ꤀ ꤁꤂꤃꤄ ꤅꤆꤇꤈:
꤉ꤊꤋꤌ ꤍꤎꤏꤐ ꤑꤒꤓꤔ ꤕꤖꤗꤘ ꤙꤚꤛꤜ꡵ 147
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ꥭꥮꥯꥰ ꥱꥲꥳꥴ ꥵꥶꥷꥸ ꥹꥺꥻꥼ ꥽꥾꥿ꦀ꡵
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and He prepared himself to enter in to dwell within His domain.
Birth pangs smote the young mother so that she might give birth to the babe,
because the time had arrived for the birth of the Fashioner of Babes.
He had recognized the town of David and entered and dwelt in it
so that in the abode of the king His Father might be honoured.
But because there was no place for His mother in Bethlehem, Luke 2:7
they turned aside into a cave, a house of stones, to dwell there.
The poor (parents) entered with the Rich One to the borrowed habitation
the feeble dwelt with the Powerful One in the hollowed cavity.
The young ewe bent the knee to give birth to the Lion's Whelp, Gen 49:9
to that Powerful One that Jacob wrote of in his blessings. Gen 49:8–12
The young dove rested in her virginity so as to beget the young Eagle, the Great King, in the small cave.
The beloved heifer lay down in her youthfulness to give birth to
the Fatted Ox[70] which became the sacrifice on behalf of sinners. Luke 15:23
The Begetter of babes begot himself corporeally;
He proceeded from the womb but the seal of her virginity remained (intact).[71]

[70] 'Fatted Ox' is a title of Christ. Cf. Aphrahat, *Dem* XVI 8 speaks of the 'fat of the Olive tree' in an analogous manner referring to Christ.

[71] R. Murray, "Mary, the second Eve," pp. 377–378.

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THE BIRTH OF 'THE HIDDEN AND THE REVEALED ONE'

His birth is divine as well as human
and it is not to be investigated because His wonder is without limit.
He is divine and in a virgin manner the womb bore Him.
He is human too because the womb gave birth to Him corporeally.
One (alone) is the Child, the true Son, perfect and wondrous,
begotten from the Father, hidden from the watchers, adored by men.
From the (divine) essence and from humanity, single is the Only-Begotten.
Son of the Majesty and son of Mary, a single[72] redeemer.
From the exalted One and from the daughter of David, a single Lord of all
from the fiery beings and from the corporeal ones, a single Powerful One.[73]
Hidden in His (divine) being, revealed in His humanity, and who can search into Him? [74]
Hidden in His (divine) nature and real in His body, wonder in all things.[75]
He is clothed in flame, girded in swaddling clothes, yet incomprehensible.
Reclined on the throne and laid in the manger, yet uninvestigable.
Being carried upon (the backs of) the Cherubs and laid upon the knees, and for that reason He is great.
He sets in motion the (created) natures and is clothed in a body, and they reiterate the wonder.

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[72] 'single' here means 'undivided.'
[73] Cf. Narsai, *PO* 40, pp. 64/65 (lines 431–434).
[74] For the variant reading to lines 854–64, see note 76.
[75] Narsai, *PO* 40, pp. 42/43 (lines 99–100); pp. 58/59 (lines 337–338).

ⵏⵜⵜⴰ ⵜⵜⵓⵙⵙⵓⵔⵜ ⵏ ⵜⵉⵔⵉⵔⵜ ⵏ ⵜⵎⵓⵔⵜ ⵏ ⵜⵉⵎⵔⵉⵡⵉⵏ ⵏⵜⵜⴰ
ⵜⵜⵓⵙⵙⵓⵔⵜ ⵏ ⵜⵉⵔⵉⵔⵜ ⵏ ⵜⵎⵓⵔⵜ ⵏ ⵜⵉⵎⵔⵉⵡⵉⵏ ⵜⵜⵓⵙⵙⵓⵔⵜ
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ⵏ ⵜⵉⵎⵔⵉⵡⵉⵏ ⵜⵜⵓⵙⵙⵓⵔⵜ ⵏ ⵜⵉⵔⵉⵔⵜ ⵏ ⵜⵎⵓⵔⵜ ⵏ ⵜⵉⵎⵔⵉⵡⵉⵏ
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ⵏ ⵜⵎⵓⵔⵜ ⵏ ⵜⵉⵎⵔⵉⵡⵉⵏ ⵜⵜⵓⵙⵙⵓⵔⵜ

He sustains the races and sucks milk, who is able (to understand) Him?
He gives rains but grasps the breast, and behold the wonder.
He is exalted and fearful and one who is sung to, behold, the wonder.
Heaven is too small for Him and so He sought a home, behold, what a grace!
The Seraphs veil themselves, Joseph adores, for here is a wonder
the ranks are stretched out and men are weak; but who is capable of (understanding)?[76]

GLORY IN THE HIGHEST, PEACE ON EARTH, HOPE TO ADAM AND PRAISE EVERYWHERE

The angels marvelled and the assemblies made joyful noise and the ranks shouted.
The divisions praised and the legions were shaken and they descended to the earth.
The fiery beings shone ablaze, spiritual beings breathed and the choirs gathered.
Thousands with myriads praised with marvellous voice.
The desert place resounded with the army of the heavenly,
and the splendour of the watchers broke through the night with its vehemence.

[76] Variant reading for lines 854–64*:* Concealed in His divinity, revealed in His humanity, then who can investigate Him. Hidden by His nature but real in His body, but who can find Him out. Instilled in flame, wrapped in swaddling clothes, then who is capable of [understanding] Him. Reclined on the throne, but laid in a manger, then who is able [to comprehend] Him. He set in motion the Cherubs, He is clothed with the members [of the body], then He is ineffable. Fearful among the wheels, carried in the arms, then He cannot be explained. He sustains the races, but sucks milk, then He cannot be expounded. He gives rain yet He grasps the breast, but He cannot be comprehended. He thundered and He is fearful, yet He is praised, behold, He is marvelous. Heaven is small for Him and then He sought a house, behold, the wonder. Seraphs veil themselves, Joseph adores, wonder in all matters.

ꠀꠁꠂꠃ ꠄꠅ꠆ꠇ ꠈꠉꠊꠋ ꠌꠍꠎꠏ ꠐꠑꠒ ꠓꠔꠀ
ꠁꠂꠃꠄ ꠅ꠆ꠇꠈ ꠉꠊꠋꠌ ꠍꠎꠏꠐ ꠑꠒꠓ ꠔꠀꠁ 860
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ꠁꠂꠃꠄ ꠅ꠆ꠇꠈ ꠉꠊꠋꠌ ꠍꠎꠏꠐ ꠑꠒꠓ ꠔꠀꠁ
ꠂꠃꠄꠅ ꠆ꠇꠈꠉ ꠊꠋꠌꠍ ꠎꠏꠐꠑ ꠒꠓꠔ ꠀꠁꠂ
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ꠁꠂꠃꠄ ꠅ꠆ꠇꠈ ꠉꠊꠋꠌ ꠍꠎꠏꠐ ꠑꠒꠓ ꠔꠀꠁ 865
ꠂꠃꠄꠅ ꠆ꠇꠈꠉ ꠊꠋꠌꠍ ꠎꠏꠐꠑ ꠒꠓꠔ ꠀꠁꠂ
ꠃꠄꠅ꠆ ꠇꠈꠉꠊ ꠋꠌꠍꠎ ꠏꠐꠑꠒ ꠓꠔꠀ
ꠁꠂꠃꠄ ꠅ꠆ꠇꠈ ꠉꠊꠋꠌ ꠍꠎꠏꠐ ꠑꠒꠓ ꠔꠀꠁ
ꠂꠃꠄꠅ ꠆ꠇꠈꠉ ꠊꠋꠌꠍ ꠎꠏꠐꠑ ꠒꠓꠔ ꠀꠁꠂ 870

Lightnings of fire were coiled round and surrounded the place
and sparklings of light have broken forth into flames and the darkness is consumed.
The wings of flames were extended and evenings vanished.
The heavenly beings descended, walked upon earth and they made it a heaven.
The regions have interwoven a crown of praise for the Lord of glories,
one from heaven and another from earth were offered to Him.
The heavenly and earthly beings have mingled each with the other
and interlaced a diadem of thanksgiving to the single Lord of all.
Angels descended to announce to men
that from earth to heaven they would be transferred by the Son who had shone forth.
One side with the other have joined and the praise resounded,
watchers and men with separate voices praised there.
Those of the household of Gabriel imparted sound to those of the household of Adam
so that by the praise of the heavenly beings they should be awakened.
With sweet melody the choir of Michael called out:
Let humanity too hear and learn their chants.
That voice of the Cherubs resounded with great trembling
so that it might stimulate shut mouths to praise.
It pronounced that 'Holy, holy, holy' of the Seraphs like horns
to awaken men in order to sanctify.
Thunder issued forth from the swift wheels, and it stirred up the earth
so that it might tremble and arise, and sing praise because its Lord had come.
The heavenly beings have taken up the tune of the chants on their harps.

Glory in the height, peace on the earth and hope to Adam.[77]
Above in heaven a crown of glory to the Lord of heavens
and below upon the earth good hope to humanity.

THE UNRECOGNIZED PASTOR OF THE RATIONAL SHEEP

The angels hastened to announce to the pastors
for the Pastor has come to the rational sheep that were lost.
Good Tidings to you, O earthly ones, the heavenly beings called *out,*
"The Lord, Messiah *[Christ]* has shone forth for you in the town of David. Luke 2:10,11
Behold, the Redeemer has come to the captives but they were not aware of Him, John 1:11
and the chief Pastor stood by His flocks but they did not recognize Him.
Behold, the Mighty One who liberates the prisoners, go and adore Him.
He makes the prisoners go out from darkness to great light.
Behold, the Mighty One who by His power causes the captivity to return,
and when He will be pierced by the persecutors, He will conquer them all.
Mankind, why have you not perceived, that He has come and visited you.
He stood at the door and you slept, failing in the praise.
Rise up, go, and see the King who has come to redeem His people. Luke 2:11
Despised and humble, but by His gentleness He will re-establish the earth.
Not as His appearance is His power,

[77] Adam is here referred to in a corporate vision as the whole humanity; Rilliet, *Turgome*, I 8,9.

and His mighty dominion is not depicted in His clothing.[78]
Although He is the redeemer lance and sword are not in His hands
neither is any adorned horse beneath Him although He is King.
No two-horse chariot is yoked for His glory to be carried about in it.
In the despised manger He is wrapped round in swaddling clothes and is laid like an infant.
In this form, that belongs to contemptibility, you shall see Him;
this is His sign, do not be doubtful when you see." Luke 2:12

THE NATIVITY OF THE SACRIFICIAL LAMB

The pastors and their flocks rejoiced in the Good News.
They believed firmly, glorified as well as carried and brought their offerings.
The innocent, simple, sincere, pure and true
for they set apart, took, offered the tithe and brought it, and they chose and offered.
Lamb for the Priest, milk for the Infant, praise for the King,
the discerning men carried;
the company of the watchers thronged; they approached the cave.
And they entered and saw Him and they bowed before Him with their gifts.
The shepherds wove the first crown and offered Him.
The lambs of the flocks were offered to the Lamb who had come,
to become the sacrifice, and He would preserve lambs from sacrifices.
Watchers and men crowded together before the Infant;

[78] Here 'clothing' means 'the clothing of flesh.'

ꠙꠚꠛ ꠜꠝꠞ ꠟ ꠠꠡꠢ ꠣꠤꠥꠦ ꠧ ꠨꠩꠪꠫ ꠬꠭:
꠮꠯꠰ ꠱꠲꠳ ꠴꠵꠶꠷ ꠸꠹꠺ ꠻꠼꠽꠾ ꠿ꡀꡁꡂ ꡃꡄꡅꡆ ꡇꡳꡈꡉꡊꡋꡌꡍꡎꡏꡐꡑꡒꡓꡔꡕꡖꡗꡘꡙꡚꡛꡜꡝꡞꡟꡠ꡵ꡡ꡶ꡢ꡷ꡣ꡸ꡤ꡹ꡥ꡺ꡦ꡻ꡧ꡼ꡨ꡽ꡩ꡾ꡪ꡿ꡫꢀꡬꢁꡭꢂꡮꢃꡯꢄꡰꢅꡱꢆꡲꢇꡳꢈ꡴ꢉ꡵ꢊ꡶ꢋ꡷ꢌ꡸ꢍ꡹ꢎ꡺ꢏ꡻ꢐ꡼ꢑ꡽ꢒ꡾ꢓ꡿ꢔꢀꢕꢁꢖꢂꢗꢃꢘꢄꢙꢅꢚꢆꢛꢇꢜꢈꢝꢉꢞꢊꢟꢋꢠꢌꢡꢍꢢꢎꢣꢏꢤꢐꢥꢑꢦꢒꢧꢓꢨꢔꢩꢕꢪꢖꢫꢗꢬꢘꢭꢙꢮꢚꢯꢛꢰꢜꢱꢝꢲꢞꢳꢟꢴꢠꢵꢡꢶꢢꢷꢣꢸꢤꢹꢥꢺꢦꢻꢧꢼꢨꢽꢩꢾꢪꢿꢫꣀꢬꣁꢭꣂꢮꣃꢯ꣄ꢰꣅꢱ꣆ꢲ꣇ꢳ꣈ꢴ꣉ꢵ꣊ꢶ꣋ꢷ꣌ꢸ꣍ꢹ꣎ꢺ꣏ꢻ꣐ꢼ꣑ꢽ꣒ꢾ꣓ꢿ꣔ꣀ꣕ꣁ꣖ꣂ꣗ꣃ꣘꣄꣙ꣅ꣚꣆꣛꣇꣜꣈꣝꣉꣞꣊꣟꣋꣠꣌꣡꣍꣢꣎꣣꣏꣤꣐꣥꣑꣦꣒꣧꣓꣨꣔꣩꣕꣪꣖꣫꣗꣬꣘꣭꣙꣮꣚꣯꣛꣰꣜꣱꣝ꣲ꣞ꣳ꣟ꣴ꣠ꣵ꣡ꣶ꣢ꣷ꣣꣸꣤꣹꣥꣺꣦ꣻ꣧꣼꣨ꣽ꣩ꣾ꣪ꣿ꣫꤀꣬꤁꣭꤂꣮꤃꣯꤄꣰꤅꣱꤆ꣲ꤇ꣳ꤈ꣴ꤉ꣵꤊꣶꤋꣷꤌ꣸ꤍ꣹ꤎ꣺ꤏꣻꤐ꣼ꤑꣽꤒꣾꤓꣿꤔ꤀ꤕ꤁ꤖ꤂ꤗ꤃ꤘ꤄ꤙ꤅ꤚ꤆ꤛ꤇ꤜ꤈ꤝ꤉ꤞꤊꤟꤋꤠꤌꤡꤍꤢꤎꤣꤏꤤꤐꤥꤑꤦꤒꤧꤓꤨꤔꤩꤕꤪꤖ꤫ꤗ꤬ꤘ꤭ꤙ꤮ꤚ꤯ꤛꤰꤜꤱꤝꤲꤞꤳꤟꤴꤠꤵꤡꤶꤢꤷꤣꤸꤤꤹꤥꤺꤦꤻꤧꤼꤨꤽꤩꤾꤪꤿ꤫ꥀ꤬ꥁ꤭ꥂ꤮ꥃ꤯ꥄꤰꥅꤱꥆꤲꥇꤳꥈꤴꥉꤵꥊꤶꥋꤷꥌꤸꥍꤹꥎꤺꥏꤻꥐꤼꥑꤽꥒꤾ꥓ꤿ꥔ꥀ꥕ꥁ꥖ꥂ꥗ꥃ꥘ꥄ꥙ꥅ꥚ꥆ꥛ꥇ꥜ꥈ꥝ꥉ꥞ꥊ꥟ꥋꥠꥌꥡꥍꥢꥎꥣꥏꥤꥐꥥꥑꥦꥒꥧ꥓ꥨ꥔ꥩ꥕ꥪ꥖ꥫ꥗ꥬ꥘ꥭ꥙ꥮ꥚ꥯ꥛ꥰ꥜ꥱ꥝ꥲ꥞ꥳ꥟ꥴꥠꥵꥡꥶꥢꥷꥣꥸꥤꥹꥥꥺꥦꥻꥧꥼꥨ꥽ꥩ꥾ꥪ꥿ꥫꦀꥬꦁꥭꦂꥮꦃꥯꦄꥰꦅꥱꦆꥲꦇꥳꦈꥴꦉꥵꦊꥶꦋꥷꦌꥸꦍꥹꦎꥺꦏꥻꦐꥼꦑ꥽ꦒ꥾ꦓ꥿ꦔꦀꦕꦁꦖꦂꦗꦃꦘꦄꦙꦅꦚꦆꦛꦇꦜꦈꦝꦉꦞꦊꦟꦋꦠꦌꦡꦍꦢꦎꦣꦏꦤꦐꦥꦑꦦꦒꦧꦓꦨꦔꦩꦕꦪꦖꦫꦗꦬꦘꦭꦙꦮꦚꦯꦛꦰꦜꦱꦝꦲꦞ꦳ꦟꦴꦠꦵꦡꦶꦢꦷꦣꦸꦤꦹꦥꦺꦦꦻꦧꦼꦨꦽꦩꦾꦪꦿꦫ꧀ꦬꦁꦭꦂꦮꦃ ꦯꦄꦛꦅꦰꦆꦜꦇꦱꦈꦝꦉꦲꦊꦞꦋ꦳ꦌꦟꦍꦴꦎꦠꦏꦵꦐꦡꦶꦑꦷꦒꦸꦓꦹꦔꦺꦕꦻꦖꦼꦗꦽꦘꦾꦙꦿꦚ꧀ꦁꦛꦂꦜꦃ ꦝꦄꦞꦅꦟꦆꦠꦇꦡꦈꦢꦉꦣꦊꦤꦋꦥꦌꦦꦍꦧꦎꦨꦏꦩꦐꦪꦑꦫꦒ꧀ꦓꦁꦔꦂꦕꦃ ꦖꦄꦗꦅꦘꦆꦙꦇꦚꦈꦛꦉꦜꦊꦝꦋꦞꦌꦟꦍꦠꦎꦡꦏꦢꦐꦤꦑꦥꦒꦦꦓꦧꦔꦨꦕꦩꦖꦪꦗꦫꦘ꧀ꦙꦁꦚꦂꦛꦃ ꦜꦄꦝꦅꦞꦆꦟꦇꦠꦈꦡꦉꦢꦊꦣꦋꦤꦌꦥꦍꦦꦎꦧꦏꦨꦐꦩꦑꦪꦒꦫꦓ꧀ꦔꦁꦕꦂꦖꦃ ꦗꦄꦘꦅꦙꦆꦚꦇꦛꦈꦜꦉꦝꦊꦞꦋꦟꦌꦠꦍꦡꦎꦢꦏꦣ

Angels and shepherds mingled up and they gave praise.

THE RECONCILIATION OF HEAVEN AND EARTH IN THE WONDER OF THE NATIVITY

Great is the wonder because chants were joined with chants,
the sons of heaven and the sons of earth in a single hymn.
Ethereal melodies mixed with corporeal ones,
and the intermingled chants from all regions ascended to the Son.
Spiritual mouths spoke there with their hosannas
and the fleshly mouths called out there with their tongues.
The clear voices of the heavenly ones cried aloud praise
and the choice songs of the pastors redoubled in thanksgiving.
The gentle sounds of the flame from the Coal of Fire[79] shone brightly,
and the clamour from humanity regarding the wonder increased.
Tongues of pure fire uttered with their hymns
and human mouths resounded with their shouts of joy.
Angels gave skilful voices in their discernment
and the simple men gave simple praise with their eulogies.
The (heavenly) ranks surrounded the small manger in their (different) forms
the rows of watchers and men were mingled in their reverences.
The cave was filled with the gatherings of spiritual beings and the bands of men.
The mouths of the sons of heaven and the sons of earth resounded.
Heaven and earth were joined to praise

[79] 'Coal of Fire' is a title of Christ; Bedjan I, 179, 184; Rilliet, *Turgome*, II 31.

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the single Mediator who reconciled them in His nativity.[80]
The infant is silent, the ranks are extended, the melodies are raised up.
The watchers sing with mingled acclaim, men give thanks.
Confined is the cave, miserable is the manger and the mother is a virgin.
Joseph trembles, praise whispers out and the Son is humble.

MARY'S SUPPLICATION WITH ADORATION AND PRAISE

Mary marvelled and became alarmed, stood beside her child.
Her pains have fled and without suffering she adored her son.
She folded her hands and fell down before Him to pray.
She opened her mouth and with lullabies sang to her Son:
"Son of the falsely accused woman, permit your mother to speak to you.
O Lord of his mother, bid your handmaid to talk with you.
Dismiss the legions to ascend to your place, let them not be put to trouble.
Behold, you are there, the watchers should go to the heights to you.
Rebuke the fiery ones and let them give room so that I may approach you.
Command the Seraphs to raise their wings so that I may come to you.
Bid the milk of virginity approach your mouth.
Look upon the breasts which your bidding has enriched in order to make you grow.
Earth was rent by the chants of the heavenly;

[80] Ephrem, *HNat* 18:36.

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Command them to gather themselves in your hidden bridal chamber on high.
Give to my shoulders the strength and power of the Cherubs — Exod 25:19–20; 37:8
so that they may escort you in a holy manner among the poor.
Bestow upon my hands swift wings of thick feathers
so that with the fingers, as though with wings, my feebleness may take hold of you.
Set upon my tongue the Seraphs' shining (cry of) 'Holy, holy, holy' — Isa 6:3
so that my mouth shall unceasingly hold out sanctification.
Make to dwell in my mind that great trembling of the Cherubs — Ezek 10
so as to bless your exalted Father who is hidden from all.
Bestow upon my feet the vehemence of the eloquent wheels — Ezek 1:16–21
so that they may carry you solemnly on the land of Judea as it has pleased you.
Adorn my knees with the Sapphire of pure appearance — Exod 24:10
so they can endure under the vehement power of your glory.
O Son of the King, give great strength to the lap of your mother
and as (on) the chariot with great power may you be honoured on it. — Ps 104:3
Bestow upon me power because I am not sufficient for your power;
give honour to yourself because the very heaven is too small for your glory.

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NATIVITY, THE DAY OF JOY AND EXULTATION

On this day[81] let the earth with everything in it exult
and instead of thorns let it bring forth the blessings from your nativity. Gen 3:18
On this day let Adam, the head of the race, rejoice
because he has acquired divinity from your birth, as he had sought. Gen 3:5
On this day let Eve give thanks more than Adam
because the infant who will remove the pains of her suffering has shone forth from her. Gen 3:16[82]
On this day let the garden exult together with its trees
because in you the expelled heir has returned to Eden, his habitation. Gen 3:23–24
On this day let the peoples in all confines (of the world) give thanks Gen 11:9
because they were scattered among all kinds of religions,[83] but they are gathered by you.
On this day let heaven exult and the earth rejoice
because their Lord has descended and set peace between both sides. Eph 2:13–18
On this day a shoot has sprung up to become the staff Isa 11:1; Ps 23:4[84]
for the aged world[85], bent through the duration of idolatry.
On this day a shoot from the house of David has germinated

[81] From this point onwards this homily speaks in terms of 'on this day,' 'today,' 'on this month.' This depicts the explicit liturgical commemoration of the event and effects of the Nativity as if bringing together simultaneously all symbols and types of Nativity scattered in 'historical time' into an 'eternal now' of the 'sacred time.' See also. Ephrem, *HNat* 4 (the whole hymn is regarding the day of the Nativity). Cf. S. P. Brock, *The Harp of the Spirit,* p. 15; "The Poet as Theologian," pp. 244–245.

[82] Ephrem, *HNat* 13:2

[83] Or 'all forms of idolatry.'

[84] Old age is the result of the Fall and sin in the Syriac tradition, cf. Ephrem, *HPar* 11:1.

[85] Rilliet, *Turgome*, I 22.

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to give drink with its wine to the thirsty and harassed earth. Isa 11:1,10; Rom 15:12
On this day the Eagle[86] looked out and the hawks fled,
and it has set the dove,[87] the persecuted humanity, in its nest.
On this day the heir[88] was awakened, (to be ready) for his possessions,
having snatched them back from the despoiler who had seized them by force.
On this day the foot that was fractured has stood up,
and in it the weak heel that was overthrown has gained strength. Gen 3:15
On this day the captivity of the peoples have entered into peace
and the pearl[89] has returned with strength to those who recognize it.

NATIVITY, THE DAY OF JOY FOR THE PROPHETS AND VIRGINITY

On this day let the band of the prophets rejoice
because, behold, their secrets are explained by your nativity.
On this day let David, your father, touch his chords
and with his harp let him sing about your nativity, because it has appeared openly.
On this day let Isaiah too be aware in his tomb
because behold, the Immanuel has come, as he prophesied. Isa 7:14
On this day let the son of Amos come to praise
because I have given birth to a babe, yet I am a virgin as he wrote about me. Isa 7:14

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[86] See note on line 552.

[87] 'Dove' = Adam and Eve as representing the whole humanity. Cf. Bedjan III, 160, 17ff; Alwan, *Création*, III, 295–6.

[88] Adam becomes 'Heir' through Christ, Bedjan VI, 679, 1–2.

[89] 'Pearl' = Adam, cf. Bedjan I, 697; III, 423, 642; VI, 813. See also S. P. Brock, "Baptismal themes," p. 328 (n. 17).

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ꘘꘙꘚ ꘛꘜꘝ ꘞꘟ꘠꘡ ꘢꘣꘤꘥ ꘦꘧꘨꘩: 156
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ꚍꚎꚏ ꚐꚑꚒ ꚓꚔꚕ ꚖꚗꚘ ꚙꚚꚛ
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On this day let Zechariah be awakened to rejoice with us
because you are the man whose name is "Sunrise" in his prophecy.[90]
On this day glory shall shine forth over their tombs
for he will awaken them to give praise with their harps.
On this day let Joseph, the husband of your mother, rejoice
because he endured ignominy on account of you and he is worthy to see you.
On this day, on which I gave birth to you, praise will increase
because the heavenly beings together with the earthly sang your praise."
On this day with these chants Mary,
the virgin sparrow, sang sweet music to the silent babe.
He mingled her lullabies with the chants of the heavenly beings
and joined her chant with the eloquent resonance of the Seraphs.
Her utterance surpassed the joyful noise of the sons of heaven
because she sang eagerly to her son lovingly.
The harp of virginity resounded among the angels[91]
and the chants of her who had not known a man or marital union got mingled in.

THE DAY OF RENEWAL AND FREEDOM

The world was renewed in praise at the nativity of the Son
from that time, on His great day, a new creation was established.

[90] Cf. Zech 6:12 (Peshitta); *denḥa* can be translated as 'Day-Star' also.

[91] In the Syriac tradition 'angelic life' and 'virginity' are often identified because 'angelic life' is the heavenly life, the goal of humanity.

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Great is the glory of this day above all days
and glorious is the beauty of this feast above all feasts.
Be awakened, O Church, with your beautiful chants
and offer to the Son gifts of praise on the day of His nativity.
On this day He drove out Zion who had persecuted Him
and He invited that despised woman who had deserted Him, to enter.
On this day the head of the barren woman is lifted up
because she was cast down in abandonment among strangers.
On this day there is exaltation to the humiliated woman
who had been thrust down, of her own will, in the shrine of demons.
On this day the sorrowful woman who had been repudiated has exulted
because the Bridegroom has come and collected and gathered her from among the idols.
On this day the lamenting woman has exulted,
because there was the marriage feast at which she has been comforted from her distresses.
Today freedom has come for the enslaved woman
who had been bound to minister to idolatry.
Today the one who was persecuted for a long time has been released,
because the Mighty One stood up and broke the fetters of her imprisonment.
Today the maid-servant of the demons has obtained freedom,
because the great Lord has put them to flight and led out what belongs to Him.

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Today the imprisoned (woman) has gone out of darkness
because the Light has shone out and shattered the gates of the house of darkness.[92]

THE DAY OF RESTORATION AND REBUILDING

Today the Painter restored the image of Adam:
because it had worn out, He mingled with it the pigment that it might not get corrupted.
Today the Master-builder has rebuilt the house that had fallen,
and so that it might not fall, the support of divinity entered in.
Today his Lord has reconciled Himself with Adam
because the Son who shone forth has set peace between the two sides. Eph 2:16
Today the Shepherd has found the sheep that had gone astray; Luke 15:5
and upon His shoulders He lifted up and carried it into Paradise.
Today the flock of the peoples has been made return,
because a hidden wolf[93] had disturbed them from the Pastor of all.
Today the outsiders have entered and became inmates Eph 2:11–12
and behold, the household members have gone out and parted in anger from the King's palace.[94]
Today God has descended and unmasked the idols,

[92] 'House of darkness' is a title of 'Sheol,' cf. Bedjan II, 624 (Hom. 55, on Resurrection II, line 10; ET in MHMJS 5).

[93] 'Hidden Wolf is a metaphor of the evil one, cf. S. P. Brock, "Baptismal Themes," p. 338–339 (ns. 76, 77, Homily on the city of Antioch); Ephrem, *HNat* 7:8.

[94] The theme of the election of the 'Peoples' instead of the 'People' is based on Pauline views and it is a catechetical and apologetic theme of the early Syriac literature. The replacing of the 'chosen people' with the 'new people' or 'the nations' of the gentiles is a predominant theme in Aphrahat and Ephrem. This is shared by Jacob of Serugh also. Cf. Aphrahat, *Dem* XVII 7; R. Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom,* pp. 41–68; S. P. Brock, *The Luminous Eye,* pp. 116–122.

ꢕꢖꢗꢘꢙ ꢚꢛꢜꢝꢞ ꢟꢠꢡꢢ ꢣꢤꢥꢦꢧ ꢨꢩꢪꢫ ꢬꢭꢮꢯ ꢰꢱꢲꢳꢴ ꢵꢶꢷꢸꢹ ꢺꢻꢼꢽꢾ ꢿꢀꢁꢂꢃ ꢄꢅꢆꢇꢈ ꢉꢊꢋꢌꢍ ꢎꢏꢐꢑꢒ ꢓꢔꢕꢖꢗ ꢘꢙꢚꢛꢜ ꢝꢞꢟꢠꢡ ꢢꢣꢤꢥꢦ ꢧꢨꢩꢪꢫ ꢬꢭꢮꢯꢰ ꢱꢲꢳꢴꢵ ꢶꢷꢸꢹꢺ ꢻꢼꢽꢾꢿ ꢀꢁꢂꢃꢄ ꢅꢆꢇꢈꢉ ꢊꢋꢌꢍꢎ ꢏꢐꢑꢒꢓ ꢔꢕꢖꢗꢘ ꢙꢚꢛꢜꢝ ꢞꢟꢠꢡꢢ ꢣꢤꢥꢦꢧ ꢨꢩꢪꢫꢬ ꢭꢮꢯꢰꢱ ꢲꢳꢴꢵꢶ ꢷꢸꢹꢺꢻ ꢼꢽꢾꢿꢀ ꢁꢂꢃꢄꢅ ꢆꢇꢈꢉꢊ ꢋꢌꢍꢎꢏ ꢐꢑꢒꢓꢔ ꢕꢖꢗꢘꢙ ꢚꢛꢜꢝꢞ ꢟꢠꢡꢢꢣ ꢤꢥꢦꢧꢨ ꢩꢪꢫꢬꢭ ꢮꢯꢰꢱꢲ ꢳꢴꢵꢶꢷ ꢸꢹꢺꢻꢼ ꢽꢾꢿꢀꢁ ꢂꢃꢄꢅꢆ ꢇꢈꢉꢊꢋ ꢌꢍꢎꢏꢐ ꢑꢒꢓꢔꢕ ꢖꢗꢘꢙꢚ ꢛꢜꢝꢞꢟ ꢠꢡꢢꢣꢤ ꢥꢦꢧꢨꢩ ꢪꢫꢬꢭꢮ ꢯꢰꢱꢲꢳ ꢴꢵꢶꢷꢸ ꢹꢺꢻꢼꢽ ꢾꢿꢀꢁꢂ ꢃꢄꢅꢆꢇ ꢈꢉꢊꢋꢌ ꢍꢎꢏꢐꢑ ꢒꢓꢔꢕꢖ ꢗꢘꢙꢚꢛ ꢜꢝꢞꢟꢠ ꢡꢢꢣꢤꢥ ꢦꢧꢨꢩꢪ ꢫ

and He has removed from them the name of gods and has despised them.
Today the Mighty One has stood up against the rebellious one
and laid hold of and bound him and ravaged his habitation that had been flourishing.
Today the Warrior has come to the captives
and bound the captor with power and made to return His own.
Today the Physician[95] has come to the wounded
bandaging, healing and giving reward to those who are healed.
Today the Doctor came to all who were fractured,
supporting, binding up, nourishing and restoring by His care.
Today the Strengthener has come for all who are infirm:
He takes hold and erects, strengthens and feeds, by His diligence.
Today the Leaven of Life[96] has pervaded our lump (of dough)
because the race of humanity had remained unleavened before His advent.
Today the Salt from the Most High has descended to season our insipidity with His stable taste. 2 Kings 2:20ff
Today the enfeebled soul is strengthened by Him:
it has abandoned and forgotten all the lures of (lustful) desires.
Today let bodies with their own proper components give praise
the blind with sight, the deaf through hearing, the lame through running.
Today forgiveness has proceeded from the King's court

[95] Cf. Bedjan II, 327, 17–18; 328, 2–3, 6–7; 329, 3–4, 13–14. See also S. P. Brock, "Baptismal Themes," p. 343.

[96] Cf. Homily 'on the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto Leaven,' Bedjan III, 411–24.

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because on the day of the nativity of His Only-Begotten, He [the King] has enriched every one.

THE MONTH OF DIVINE FRUITS FOR THE IMPOVERISHED CREATION

In this month[97] which is without fruits the Fruit of Life was sent
to us, in order to nourish us with its soundness.
In this month in which the granary is impoverished of crops — Lev 23:11[98]
the Sheaf of mercy is gathered to satisfy us.
In this month in which all the poor are in need,
the Rich One has come sprinkling His treasures upon the mendicants.
In this month in which all trees are stripped of leaves; — Gen 3:7
stripped[99] bodies have been adorned with all kinds of recovery.
In this month in which the buds on the branches are seared off (by cold)
the Offshoot of the virgin gave fruit from her womb. — Isa 11:1
In this month that sheds the leaves from the trees
the leaves of Adam have been exchanged for the garment of light. — Gen 3:7
In this month that scorches the seeds by its severe cold
the Blessed Seed[100] sprang up from 'the earth that had not been ploughed'.[101]
In this month that comes to strip off all ornaments
the nakedness of the leaders of our race has been clothed.

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[97] The month of *Kanun* (= the period of December-January); cf. Ephrem, *HNat* 4:29–32; 5:1–3.

[98] Ephrem, *HNat* 4:32.

[99] There is word-play in the Syriac text: *Shliḥe* means also 'apostles,' 'messengers,' 'missionaries.'

[100] 'Blessed Seed' = Christ, cf. Ephrem, *HNat* 4:30–31; 20:2–3.

[101] The 'Unploughed Earth' here refers to Mary, denoting the virginal conception.

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In this month that multiplies bonds of all borrowers
the Treasure through which all debts are blotted out, has come to us.[102]
In this month that deprives the earth of all luxuries
the Great Blessing has been sent to all persons.[103]
In this month in which the sun ascends degrees of light,
light has been renewed for us from the Most High. Luke 1:78
In this month in which the sun leaps up to the high region
Radiance has descended and the extremities have become illumined from its dazzling light.
In this month that even the darkness retraces its footsteps
the evil one is brought low and has turned back from victory.
In this month in which the night decreases from its fullness
the race that was decreased due to its wounds has abounded.
In this month that prolongs the morning by its flashings,
the snares of the evil one have been exposed from humanity.
In this month in which the night holds back from the day
the Light has touched the soul that was darkened.
In this month in which darkness is conquered by the luminary (sun)
the hated evil one has been overcome by our Redeemer.
In this month in which the sun creeps into the hollow dens
the Sun has entered and dwelt in the cave to enlighten the earth.

[102] Rilliet, *Turgome*, I 12.
[103] Lit., 'souls.'

ꠓꠔꠕ ꠖ ꠗꠘꠙꠚ ꠛꠜꠝꠞꠟꠠ ꠡꠢ ꠣꠤꠥꠦ꠸
ꠧ꠨꠩ ꠪꠫꠬ ꠭꠮꠯ ꠰꠱꠲ ꠳꠴꠵ ꠶꠷꠸꠹:
꠺ ꠻꠼꠽꠾ ꠿ꡀꡁ ꡂꡃ ꡄꡅꡆ ꡇꡈꡉ꡸
1110 ꠧ꠨꠩ ꠪꠫꠬ ꡊꡋꡌ ꡍꡎꡏ ꡐꡑꡒꡓ:
161 ꠺ ꡔꡕꡖꡗ ꡘꡙꡚ ꡛꡜ ꡝꡞꡩ꡸
ꠧ꠨꠩ ꠪꠫꠬ ꡟꡠꡡ ꡢꡣꡤ ꡥꡦꡧꡨ:
ꡩꡪ ꡫ ꡬꡭꡮ ꡯꡰꡱꡲꡳ ꡴꡵ ꡶꡷꡸꡹꡸
ꠧ꠨꠩ ꠪꠫꠬ ꡺꡻ ꡼꡽꡾꡿ ꡀꡁꡂ:
ꡃ ꡄꡅꡆꡇ ꡈꡉꡊ ꡋꡌ ꡍꡎꡏ꡸
1115 ꠺ ꡐꡑꡒ ꡓꡔꡕ ꡖꡗꡘ ꡙꡚꡛ꡸
ꠧ꠨꠩ ꠪꠫꠬ ꡜꡝꡞ ꡟꡠꡡ ꡢꡣꡤꡥ:
꠺ ꡦꡧꡨ ꡩꡪꡫ ꡬꡭꡮ ꡯꡰꡱꡲ꡸
ꠧ꠨꠩ ꠪꠫꠬ ꡳ꡴꡵ ꡶꡷꡸ ꡹꡺꡻꡼:
꠺ ꡽꡾꡿ ꢀꢁꢂ ꢃꢄꢅ ꢆꢇꢈ ꢉꢊ꡸
1120 ꠧ꠨꠩ ꠪꠫꠬ ꢋꢌꢍ ꢎꢏꢐ ꢑꢒꢓ:
꠺ ꢔꢕꢖꢗ ꢘꢙꢚꢛ ꢜꢝꢞꢟ ꢠꢡꢢ꡸
ꠧ꠨꠩ ꠪꠫꠬ ꢣꢤꢥ ꢦꢧꢨ ꢩꢪꢫ:
꠺ ꢬꢭꢮꢯ ꢰꢱꢲ ꢳꢴꢵ ꢶꢷꢸꢹ꡸
1125 ꠺ ꢺꢻ ꢼꢽꢾ ꢿꣀꣁꣂ ꣃ꣄ꣅ꣆ ꣇꣈꣉꡸
ꠧ꠨꠩ ꠪꠫꠬ ꣊꣋꣌ ꣍꣎꣏ ꣐꣑꣒꣓꣔:

THE DAY OF RENOVATION AND PRAISE

On this day in which the old things have been renewed
the Lord of kings has renewed for us the things of former times.
On this day in which all commandments are renewed,
a decree has descended from the heights to the infant Adam.[104]
On this day in which the orders multiply for the judges
the judgement of mercies has been sent to the mortals.
On this day in which kings also command innovations
the new commandment has proceeded to the earth so that peace shall reign.
On this feast in which the watchers made joyful noise to sound on their harps
let the redeemed peoples again praise with their tongues.
On this feast that is observed by the heavenly beings
let there be glory to the Son, worshipped by the earthly.
On this day I have sung praise to your divinity;
On your great day may I see the mercy of your divinity.
On this day, with inadequate words, behold, I have glorified you;
On your great day-break make me worthy to sing at length.
On this feast I have given the gifts of my words to your church,
in that eternal (feast) let me be a wedding-guest at your marriage feast.

[104] The 'infant state of Adam' is explained in Syriac literature as his innocence and simplicity due to his lack of experience to stay on in his state of combat with the evil one. Cf. A. Salvesen, "Infants or fools in the Garden of Eden?"

ꠔꠕ ꠖꠗꠘ ꠙꠚ ꠛꠜꠝꠞ ꠟꠠꠡꠢꠣꠤ
ꠥꠦꠧ ꠨꠩꠪ ꠫꠬꠭ ꠮꠯꠰꠱ ꠲ ꠳꠴꠵꠶꠷:
꠸ꠔ ꠹꠺꠻꠼ ꠽꠾ ꠿ꡀꡁꡂ ꡃꡄꡅ ꡆꡇꡈ꡵
1130 ꠥꠦꠧ ꠨꠩꠪ ꡉꡊꡋꡌ ꡍꡎꡏ:
162 ꠔꠕ ꡐꡑꡒ ꡓꡔ ꡕꡖꡗ ꡘꡙ ꡚꡛꡜ꡶
ꠥꠦꠧ ꠨꠩꠪ ꡝꡞꡟꡠ ꡡ ꡢꡣꡤꡥ:
ꡦꡧ ꠸ꠔ ꡨꡩ ꡪꡫꡬ ꡭꡮꡯ ꡰꡱꡲ꡷
ꠥꠦꠧ ꠢꠣꠤ ꡳ꡴꡵꡶ ꡷꡸꡹꡺꡻꡸
1135 ꠔꠕ ꡼꡽꡾ ꡿ꡀꡁ ꡂꡃꡄꡅ ꡆꡇꡈꡉꡊ꡹
ꠥꠦꠧ ꠢꠣꠤ ꡋꡌꡍꡎ ꡏꡐ ꡑꡒꡓꡔ:
ꠔꠕ ꡕꡖꡗꡘ ꡙꡚꡛ ꡜꡝꡞꡟ ꡠꡡꡢꡣ꡺
ꠥꠦꠧ ꠨꠩꠪ ꡤꡥꡦ ꡧꡨꡩꡪꡫ:
ꡬꡭꡮ ꡯꡰ ꡱꡲ ꡳ꡴꡵ ꡶꡷꡸꡹꡻꡼
1140 ꠥꠦꠧ ꠨꠩꠪ ꡽꡾꡿ꡀꡁ ꡂꡃꡄꡅ:
ꡆꡇꡈ ꡉꡊ ꡋꡌꡍ ꡎꡏꡐꡑ ꡒꡓꡔꡕ꡽
ꡖꡗꡘ ꡙꡚ ꡛꡜꡝ ꡞꡟꡠꡡ ꡢꡣꡤꡥ:
ꡦꡧ ꠢꠣꠤ ꡨꡩꡪꡫ ꡬꡭꡮꡯ ꡰꡱꡲꡳ꡾
꡴꡵꡶ ꡷꡸꡹ ꡺꡻꡼ ꡽꡾꡿ꡀꡁ:

On this feast glory be to your Father and to you exaltation
and to the Holy Spirit the crown of victory and mercy be upon us.
The end of the homily on the Nativity.

1145 ﴿ﻭَﺟَﻌَﻠُﻮٓاْ ﺑَﻴۡﻨَﻪُۥ ﻭَﺑَﻴۡﻦَ ٱلۡﺠِﻨَّﺔِ ﻧَﺴَﺒٗﺎ

ﻭَﻟَﻘَﺪۡ ﻋَﻠِﻤَﺖِ ٱلۡﺠِﻨَّﺔُ.

II SECOND HOMILY ON THE NATIVITY[1]

[1] See an Italian translation of this homily by C. Vona, *Omelie Mariologiche*, pp. 237–248.

INTRODUCTION

INFORMATION ON THIS HOMILY	
Homily Title:	Second Homily on the Nativity
Source of Text:	*Homiliae selectae Mar-Jacobi Sarugensis* edited by Paul Bedjan and Sebastian Brock (2nd ed. Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2006), vol. 6, pp. 162–178.
Lines:	312

OUTLINE

The homily begins by searching the reason behind the wonder of the Son's corporeal birth. It is the second birth of the Son due to the fallen state of Adam. Through rebellion the adversary had stolen away the greatness of (Adam) that was not his own. Therefore the Magnificent One brought himself down into smallness and feebleness in humility to regain him. Against the haughtiness and arrogance of the adversary he humbled himself and became a suckling in his small estate. Since the offspring of Eve became enslaved to the adversary the Lord of Eve became an offspring to redeem them (11–38). The 'Living Fire' wrapped in swaddling clothes uprooted briars and thorns from earth. Seeing the Shepherd who became a Lamb in his own pasture the wolves took to flight (55–58).

Making use of the imagery of light and darkness our author describes the ongoing role of the evil one in the history of salvation. By idols and idolatry the evil one darkened the road of humanity and people were led astray. But a "New Sign" from Bethlehem, a babe, pulled down the temples of the idols of error and illumined the way that remained darkened. The Evil one finds the "New Sign" shattering the idols and overthrowing all the labours of the darkened way by illumining the whole world (59–104). By the technique of dramatic dialogue the author makes the evil one and the Error confess their dilemma. The Evil one found the conception and the Nativity of the Son beyond explanation. He failed to understand the identity of the child who is at the same time divine and human. He found the new-born threatening to remove the idols, to unmask the images and to overthrow his own crown. The child is seen bound to cease sacrifices, pull down altars, destroy temples, dismiss oracles and set idolatry in insensitivity. Error and its company saw the child girded and laid in a poor fashion having neither

radiance nor majesty. But the mother of the child is a virgin which alarmed the evil company. The Evil one failed to find out the origin of the child even though he had watched and devised harm ever since the time of Cain by the sentence on Eve. He sensed a mystery concealed in the child and did not understand how the young girl, Mary, conceived (155–224).

The evil one devises harm through Herod by instigating envy. Error finds his best friend in the 'daughter of Hebrews' who hates truth and was trained in deceit as well as skilled in falsehood. He [error] sets the 'daughter of Jerusalem' against the child (241–290). The babe entered creation through the road of nativity and the demons could not understand from where he has come. But through his nativity he reconciled the earthly and the heavenly. He broke down the fence of enmity between the two sides and united them to praise with the same chant. He taught the same hymn of praise to men and angels. The heavenly beings rejoiced, the earthly exulted and the whole creation was enlightened in the Son who came to renew all by his Nativity (291–302).

SUMMARY

The Wonder of Divine Nativity (1–10)
The Reason for the Son's Corporeal Birth (11–38)
The Way of the Humble State and the Frightened Demons (39–58)
Devils' Consultation to Satan (59–80)
The Deliberations of Error (81–104)
Demons' Search for the Reason of the Great Light (105–120)
The Light Shone forth at Bethlehem (121–154)
The Terrified Company of Satan, Error and Demons (155–184)
The Contemplations of the Terrified Evil One (185–228)
The Report from Persia and the Secret Devices of the Evil One (229–262)
The Side of the Left and the Plot against the Child (263–290)
The Babe of Swaddling Clothes, the Reconciler and the Life-Giver (291–313)

TEXT AND TRANSLATION

THE WONDER OF DIVINE NATIVITY

God has performed a great wonder at the nativity of His Son[1]
who came forth into the open to redeem the world through His smallness.
A virgin conceived Him, a womb has contained Him and the manger
sustained Him: Who then is able to speak without wonder?
(Mary's) knees have escorted Him, arms have carried Him, a bosom embraced Him;
and on account of all these there is wonder and bewilderment to those who discern.
A breast is His sustenance, a cave His bridal chamber, a manger His bed;
and among these the mind wonders when it looks upon Him.
He is girded round in swaddling clothes and He sucks the milk humbly;
He is clothed in flame, yet He moves the wheels vigorously. Ezek 1:15–21

THE REASON FOR THE SON'S CORPOREAL BIRTH

Then, for what (reason) is this poverty for the Son of the Rich One?
Let the one who cares for the advantages hear with love.
Why did the great and eternal Son come down,
and even to come a second time according to corporeal birth?
What is the reason that after the Chariot He would dwell in the manger;
and after majesty why should He come to the confines of smallness?
That adversary who had wanted to become god,
in rebellion, stole away greatness that was not his.

[1] Cf. Ephrem, *CNis* 48:8.

B-Br 7

ܐܲܒ ܩܲܕܡܝܐ

ܘܐܡܪ ܠܟܘܢ ܡܠܟܐ: ܘܥܒܕ ܛܒܬܐ

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ܐܲܘܐ ܙܟܐ ܗܟܢ ܟܬܒܐ ܒܟܝܐ ܒܪܝܫ: 1
ܙܐܐ ܠܡܫܟܚ ܒܢܦܫܐ ܕܟܬܒܐ ܕܟܬܘܒܐ ܐܲܒ܀
ܠܐ ܬܗܘܐ ܠܟ ܐܠܗܐ ܕܢܟܪ ܥܠ ܦܢܝ ܐܲܒܐ:
ܠܐ ܬܥܒܕ ܠܟ ܦܣܠ ܘܟܠ ܕܡܘܬ ܒܫܡܝܐ ܡܢ ܬܚܬ܀
ܘܠܐ ܬܫܬܚܘܐ ܠܗܘܢ ܘܠܐ ܬܦܠܚܘܢ: 5
ܐܢܐ ܗܘ ܐܲܒ ܐܠܗܟ ܩܲܢܝܐ ܦܩܕ ܥܘܠ ܒܢܝ ܒܢܝܢ ܥܠ ܐܒܗܬ ܒܢܝ ܪܒܥܐ ܘܥܠ ܕܪܒܥܐ ܒܢܝ ܬܠܬܐ ܕܣܢܐܘ ܒܢܝ ܐܒܗܬ ܥܠ ܒܢܝ ܪܒܥܐ ܘܥܒܕ ܚܣܕ ܠܐܠܦܝܢ ܕܢܛܪ ܠܗ ܘܠܡܨܘܬܝ ܢܛܪ ܠܗ ܘܫܡܪ ܠܦܩܘܕܝܗ ܘܠܦܩܘܕܬܗ ܕܬܗܘܐ ܥܡܗ ܘܠܐ ܬܫܬܚܘܐ ܠܗܘܢ ܘܠܐ ܬܦܠܚܘܢ: 10
ܐܲܒ ܕܥܒܕ ܚܣܕ ܠܐܠܦܝܢ ܕܢܛܪ ܠܗ ܘܫܡܪ ܠܦܩܘܕܝܗ ܘܠܦܩܘܕܬܗ ܕܬܗܘܐ ܥܡܗ ܘܠܐ ܬܫܬܚܘܐ ܠܗܘܢ ܘܠܐ ܬܦܠܚܘܢ: ܐܲܒ ܕܥܒܕ ܚܣܕ ܠܐܠܦܝܢ ܕܢܛܪ ܠܗ ܘܫܡܪ ܠܦܩܘܕܝܗ ܘܠܦܩܘܕܬܗ ܕܬܗܘܐ ܥܡܗ ܘܠܐ ܬܫܬܚܘܐ ܠܗܘܢ ܘܠܐ ܬܦܠܚܘܢ: 15
ܐܲܒ ܕܥܒܕ ܚܣܕ ܠܐܠܦܝܢ ܕܢܛܪ ܠܗ ܘܫܡܪ ܠܦܩܘܕܝܗ ܘܠܦܩܘܕܬܗ ܕܬܗܘܐ ܥܡܗ ܘܠܐ ܬܫܬܚܘܐ ܠܗܘܢ ܘܠܐ ܬܦܠܚܘܢ:

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Then the Magnificent One wished, by bringing himself down to smallness,
to take up His own from the rebellious one and to scoff at him.
And because he had wanted to become God boldly
God descended and became human humbly.
Because He had seen that Adam had fallen from the noble rank,
He carried in His person the body of Adam and he was made victorious in Him.
He humbled himself in response to the haughtiness to which the demons had raised themselves
so that they might become a laughing stock of the smallness that prevailed over them.
And that one who had become arrogant when he exalted himself to become a god,
the new born babe who was laid in the manger overthrew and trampled upon his crown.
A suckling whom Mary girded round in swaddling clothes
dashed into pieces all the idols of the earth and removed them.
The silent babe who was bound and laid in the neglected manger
bound the tyrant and subdued the strength of his rebelliousness.
The Son of the virgin overthrew in the contest that mighty one
who had enslaved the generations to vanity, making him a mockery.
The children of Eve had been enslaved to the adversary; the Lord of Eve became a child to redeem them.
This reason summoned Him to come to the small estate,
and on account of this the small manger sufficed Him who willed so

ܐܪܥܐ ܘܟܠ ܒܟ ܡܠܐܟܐ ܕܟܪܘܙܐ:
ܬܫܒܚ ܘܡܕܐ ܡܢ ܫܡܝܐ ܒܪܟ ܡ̈
ܐܢܫ ܘܚܕ ܒܐܪܥܐ ܕܟܠ ܚܢܢܐ:
ܫܡ ܟܠܐ ܐܐ ܚܢܢܐ ܚܨܨܐ ܡ̈
ܟܠ ܘܣܡܐ ܕܐ ܠܐܡ ܘܒܠ ܡܢ ܘܙܐ:
ܒܠ ܣܪܐ ܕܐ ܒܫܡܝܐ ܒܐܡ ܚܨܨ ܡ̈
ܟܠ ܐܚܐ ܘܐ ܒܐܪܥܐ ܒܫܡ ܐܠܗܐ:
ܐܐ ܚܛܐ ܘܐ ܒܫܡ ܐܠܗܐ ܐܢܐ ܡ̈
ܐܐ ܒܐܪܥܐ ܘܐ ܒܫܡ ܐܠܗܐ ܐܢܐ:
ܟܠ ܐܢܫ ܕܐ ܒܫܡ ܐܠܗܐ ܐܢܐ ܡ̈
ܐܐ ܒܐܪܥܐ ܘܐ ܒܫܡ ܐܠܗܐ ܐܢܐ:
ܟܠ ܐܢܫ ܕܐ ܒܫܡ ܐܠܗܐ ܐܢܐ ܡ̈
ܐܐ ܒܐܪܥܐ ܘܐ ܒܫܡ ܐܠܗܐ ܐܢܐ:
ܟܠ ܐܢܫ ܕܐ ܒܫܡ ܐܠܗܐ ܐܢܐ ܡ̈

THE WAY OF THE HUMBLE STATE AND THE FRIGHTENED DEMONS

He dwelt in the cave and pulled down all the exalted temples
that Error had built in various places for empty idols.
His birth at Bethlehem in a manger was exalted
by the humility that overthrew the arrogant from their positions.[2]
The virgin gave birth and the gods were shaken so as to be overthrown,
and the evil spirits trembled at the amazement that fell upon them.
The idols of the earth began trembling in their garments
and an unwonted tottering overthrew idolatry with a clash.[3]
The hidden demons in the manifest images trembled so as to be overthrown;
the beauty of painted images began to become corrupted.
The demons wailed at the sign that they saw in idolatry,
for, it was shaking so as to fall totally with the trembling that had seized it.
A Flash of Light shone forth over them from Bethlehem,
and darkness trembled at its great brightness that dazzled it.
The brightness of His light shone forth upon creation from the house of
David and began to drive out their dark clouds.
The Living Fire wrapped itself round within the swaddling clothes;

[2] Cf. J.-P. P. Martin, "Sur la chute des idoles," p. 117, tr. p. 137; p. 118, tr. p. 137; p. 116, tr. p. 136. The crucified Christ is referred to as the destroyer of idols by Jacob of Serugh.

[3] Cf. J.-P. P. Martin, "Sur la chute des idoles," p. 114, 115, tr. p. 135.

ܐܢܐ ܕܒܚܢܝܐ ܐܚܝܟ ܘܫܘܬܦܐ ܒܫܘܥܒܕܐ ܕܝܫܘܥ
ܡܫܝܚܐ ܒܓܠܘܬܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܕܐܬܝܬ ܠܓܙܪ ܐܦ ܐܢܐ ܒܐܦܣܘܣ ܒܓܙܪ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܘܣܗܕܘܬܐ ܕܝܫܘܥ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܗܘ ܕܐܬܓܠܝ ܠܝ ܒܪܘܝܐ ܘܫܡܥ ܩܠܐ ܪܒ ܐܝܟ ܩܠ ܫܘܦܪܐ ܕܡܬܩܥ ܒܗ ܕܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܚܙܝܬ ܘܫܡܝܐ ܦܬܝܚܝܢ ܘܡܢܪܬܐ ܕܕܗܒܐ ܕܡܗܠܟ ܒܝܢ ܫܒܥ ܡܢܪܬܐ ܘܒܡܨܥ ܕܝܠܗܝܢ ܕܡܪܝ ܪܫܐ ܘܚܙܪܬܗ ܟܨܠܓ ܘܫܒܥ ܟܘܟܒܐ ܒܝܕ ܝܡܝܢܗ ܘܒܝܢ ܫܒܥ ܡܢܪܬܐ ܗܠܟ ܐܢܐ ܘܚܙܝܬ ܘܗܐ ܫܒܥ ܡܠܐܟܐ ܕܫܒܥ ܟܢܫܝܐ ܐܢܘܢ ܫܒܥ ܡܢܪܬܐ ܫܒܥ ܟܢܫܝܐ ܗܢ ܘܫܒܥ ܟܘܟܒܐ ܫܒܥ ܡܠܐܟܐ ܗܢ ܘܫܒܥ ܟܢܫܝܐ ܗܢ ܘ

and the briars and thorns that became aware of it, fled from its presence. Gen 3:18
The Shepherd of the earth became a lamb[4] within His own pasture; Ezek 34:23
and the wolves saw and began fleeing in their fright.

DEVILS' CONSULTATION TO SATAN

The whole company of devils, sons of the left,[5] encamped
beside Satan, the leader of all rebellion.
Something like the following was said by the deceitful ones
to that malicious one, father of all falsehood:
"A new sign, not a fair one, has appeared to us,
because a certain power has beckoned and shaken idolatry.
Behold, all the gods are quaking—but why?
and the whole of our place trembles and is being shaken by fright?
A flash of light has shone forth suddenly upon the whole world,
and the earth has been enlightened but the whole of idolatry has grown dark.
Let us learn from you what is the reason that has shaken us,
because it is your concern to darken the earth which, behold, is enlightened."
The evil one said, "Me too, the Flash of Light has blinded,
unless I learn what is its reason, I do not understand.
It seems to me that some kind of a distress will come upon our place,
for I trembled greatly when I saw the idols that tottered so as to be overthrown.

[4] Ephrem, *HAzym* 8:6; *HNat* 3:15.

[5] 'Sons of the left': It is a theological expression very common in the early Syriac literature referring to a group of sinister elements such as 'evil one,' 'error,' 'adversary,' 'Satan,' etc. It is based on Matt 25:33 ff; cf. Ephrem, *CNis* 36:18; R. Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom*, p. 249.

ⵎⵣⵔⵉ ⵎⵇⵇⵔⴰⵏ ⵖⵓⵔⵏⵖ ⵙⵙⵓⵔⵜ ⵏ ⵜⵣⵔⴼⵜ ⵙⵙⵓⵔⵜ ⵏ ⵜⵣⵔⴼⵜ ⵜⴰⵎⴰⵡⴰⵙⵜ ⵏ ⵜⵎⵣⵡⵓⵔ

Why then does the Light that has shone forth distress only me
who am wholly involved in the labour that belongs to darkened roads?
Who shall be uncovered by the appearance of the Light, except myself
seeing that in darkness I am diligent to accomplish all my desires?
Who feels pain at my pain like me, apart from myself?
and I am on the track of what is the reason that has caused us to tremble."

THE DELIBERATIONS OF ERROR

Error speaks to the troubled assembly of the left:[6]
"Great is the suffering and yet you remain quiet at what has happened.
The light that shone forth is indeed increasing, and what shall I do
seeing that I introduced idols everywhere in darkness?
I have concealed the way, so that peoples of the earth might not see it
and I led them astray in darkness.
And if you will be patient with the light and let it take control on the earth
the way that I had veiled from humanity will become visible.
And if people see the way in the light that shines
they will abandon wandering and walk on it, and then what shall I do?
Let the light be concealed in the darkness of your shadows
and covertly I shall carry out my affairs through your powers.
It was a labour for me when I introduced idols to the earth.
See, that you do not become weak or tremble on account of these events.

[6] 'Assembly of the left': see note on line 59 above.

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Within darkness I sat and devised deities
and if the light shines out upon them they will be useless.
I am industrious, I am skilful in all kinds of harm,
but I am not able to set my paths in the light.
I am a hater of light from the beginning and I am diligent
so that in darkness for ever I may sit as well as you.
For I know that if our fraud is exposed in the light
the whole of creation will hate and rebuke our deeds."
"We do not travel on the paths of Light", says Error,
"Do not be patient with it lest it may uproot you from various regions."

DEMONS' SEARCH FOR THE REASON OF THE GREAT LIGHT

The demons speak to the evil Error, "What shall we do?
You are our teacher and we are trained in your instruction.
Who will inform us of the cause of the trembling that terrifies us,
if not you or Satan who is our teacher?
Who will tell us the reason for the Light that, behold, troubles us,
unless one of you does not inform us about its affair?"
The evil one says: "There is no time for long (speeches);
I am in a hurry to see my action, for it makes me afraid.
Now be silent, as for me I shall proceed and go to investigate
whence the Light has shone forth which has shaken and terrified us.
I shall roam the (earth's) extremities, I shall fly on the heights, I shall spy out the depths.
I shall reach afar, I shall search into the abysses, I shall watch the clouds.
I shall fly in the air, I shall explore the inmost recesses and I shall pass over the seas;

95 حەی هۆشی مەحەمەدی کۆتایی:
ئەو وێنەی کە ئەوان حەزیان خۆیەتی۔
هەموو ئایەتی قورئان ئایەتی حەق:
هەرچی ئایەتی ئەوان لە مرۆڤ ئایەتی۔
هیچ ئایەتی کە حوکمی هیچ هەڵەیەکی ئایەتی:
100 هەرچی حوکمی ئەکەم ئایەتی ئەیەوێ۔
مەبەستی ئایەتی ڕەحمەتی هەڵەیان ڕاگرتووە:
خۆشەویستی هیچی ئایەتی دەستپێکی۔
168 کە هەستیان بەوە دەکەن ئەمەی ئەوان:
لە ئەنجامی کە وڵاتەکەی هیچ قبووڵی۔
105 ئەوەی پێیان هەستی ئایەتی:
هەڵگری ئەم هەرەشەیەی ئاوێتەی۔
هیچ هەوڵی کە ئەیەوێ وەرگرتنی کە:
ئاڵا ئی ئەم لە هیچیان دژی ئەمەی۔
هیچ ئەو کە ئایەتی وتووە وەی هەیە کە:
110 ئی بە هیچی لا هەوڵی کە کەس هەبێتی۔
ئەو هەستی کە ئێرە بە ڕاستیان:
ئاڵ وەک ئێوە ئەو هەبێت هیچی کە۔
هەیان هەی کە ئەگەر ئەم کەسێتی:
وەی ئەیان بێت وتووە ڕاستی لە هێزی کە۔
115 ئەوە حەقیقی ئاگەهی ئەوە ئەوەی کۆتایی:
ئەیان کێشەیان ئەڕا ئەوەیە ئەوە ئێستا۔
ئەبێ کاڵ ئەگەر ئەوەی هێڵە ئەیەی کۆتایی:

I shall set off over the (river) crossings, I shall reach the firmament, I shall plunge into the earth.
And in all places I shall seek out what is the cause of the trembling,
and I shall bring the news and tell you about the happening."

THE LIGHT SHONE FORTH AT BETHLEHEM

And when Satan had gone out hastily from the camp
the evil company stands quietly waiting for him.
He flew off and hurried into all the heights and all the depths,
and his impetus was swift over all regions and boundaries.
He looked from afar towards Bethlehem, as an angel was passing,
awesome and glorious, clothed in flashing light,
flying around and coming, full of joy and haste, beautiful and pleasant:
his fire blazing and his voice pouring forth great light.
Satan saw him and as he concealed himself with trembling from him;
he waited to see where that fiery being was going.
Now that watcher alighted among the company of the shepherds — Luke 2:8–11
and began announcing about the redeemer of the whole world.
Simple men, pastors of the sheep, ordinary innocent people,
they began learning from the angel the good news that he had brought.
And the fiery one stood there and raised his voice to the guileless men;
he began announcing about the infant with an exalted voice.
"Behold, I am announcing to you today," he was telling them, — Luke 2:8–12
"A great joy that is full of riches for the whole world.
I am announcing to you about the Redeemer and about the Saviour

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who is the Lord Christ who has shone forth from the house of David.
Behold, at Bethlehem, a new born babe that is girded round, an infant is laying there
in a neglected manger, and He is the Lord and the Redeemer."
And before the angel had finished speaking,
behold, the whole of his legion descended to glorify. Luke 2:13
They made the night of the nativity there as a day
because their flame was far more powerful than the sun.
The great light of their countenances was inflamed
and the whole appearance of their persons was full of brightness.
The earth quakes at the glory that issues from their mouths,
and the place resounds from the chanting of their tongues.
Sincere praise and a sweet voice in a mighty mouth—
a hymn of wonder with a melody that gives the soul bliss.
Fire that sings to the Light that has shone forth amidst the darkness
and the flame that raises up praise with an exalted voice.

THE TERRIFIED COMPANY OF SATAN, ERROR AND DEMONS

Satan saw the gathering of the watchers, and the rebellious one trembled,
and little by little he deserted and departed like a thief.
In the dazzlings of the sons of light darkness was swallowed up,
and like smoke in the wind it departed from them.
The evil one had turned back carrying misery for the company of his side
and his mouth was filled with news full of all kinds of distress.
"Come, go and see the terrible event that has happened at Bethlehem

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for from there is the cause of the trembling that is troubling us.
If the affair does not change, it is for us to flee.
Then Error will be ashamed and I shall blush and you will perish.
Come, let us go, and hear the resounding of the watchers that is at Bethlehem
for the earth is rent by the sound of their shouts of joy.
Come, from afar, let us see the gathering of the heavenly beings
but let us not approach so that their dazzlings may not blind us."
Then Error, while trembling, led off her children
and arrived in Judea to see what had been spoken.
It saw the new born girded and laid in a poor fashion, Isa 53:2
having neither radiance nor appearance nor majesty.
Wretched is His cave, and small is His manger, and young is His mother.
He is humble and silent but the demons shrink back from looking at Him.
They, the forces of the adversary, were struck by bewilderment,
and what to say about the child, they did not know.
When they were encouraged by His smallness to treat Him with contempt they saw that,
that a virgin is His mother, and they howled out of wonder.
The demons say to the evil one, "Explain about the child.
Is he a human being? Is he God? Or who is he?
Is he from the heavenly, is he from the earthly, is he from the spiritual beings,
is he from among the corporeal beings or from where is he? You explain to us.
You are wise, has it passed beyond you regarding the affair?
Tell us, what is the story of the child who is exalted more than us?"

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THE CONTEMPLATIONS OF THE TERRIFIED EVIL ONE

The evil one says, "Until now, I was wise
but here I am vanquished, then how to understand anything, I do not know.
Behold ever since Cain there was no birth that I have not looked into,
and birth pangs have not smitten any travailing women without me.
"When I hear the sound of the wailing of travailing women,
I am proud of the sentence on Eve, seeing how much she has been smitten. Gen 3:16
Also when they conceive I plan, if I can,
to mix adultery with the pure course of (marriage) partnership.
When they give birth also, I do not depart afar from them
so that if there is room for me, I will cause harm to their beloved (babies).
In this child a mystery is concealed from me and it is veiled
and I am not able to understand His story clearly.[7]
When the young girl conceived I was not aware how she conceived,
nor was I close at hand to see her new born when she gave birth.
Now she is a virgin and what shall I say about her babe?
This marvel of the child terrifies me because it is inexplicable.
Behold, from Eve until this daughter of the Hebrews,
virginity and milk in the same body have not been seen.
Because she is virgin it seems to me that He is God

[7] Bold [evil] ones failed to understand the mystery of the Son; cf. Bedjan III 591, 12; Olinder, *Epistulae*, XIII (p. 55).

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but because He is corporeal I think again that may be He is human.
The whole way of this child is outside (my experience)
and it disturbs me, and how I should speak about Him, I do not know.
When I saw how His conception was without marital union,
I perceived Him; His nativity too is exalted beyond explanation.
A virgin is His mother but who is His father if He is an earthly one?
Whose Son should I call Him and who is His father? I do not know."
The demons say: "What shall we say about the child,
for, if the matter of His nativity is not revealed even to you, who will tell us?
You are skilful, you are wise and crafty, eminent and learned;
practised and sharp and prepared for the wickedness of all who are begotten.
If the new born babe subdues you, the great one, and you did not know Him,
what will He do to us after a while, as you say?
If from today He has thus subdued your tyranny
if He grows up, where will you reach if He meets you?
If you would be patient with Him He will carry away your diadem,
your crown He will overthrow, idols He will remove, images He will unmask.
Sacrifices He will cause to cease, altars He will pull down, temples He will destroy.
Oracles He will dismiss, and He will set idolatry in insensitivity.
While He is a babe devise something against Him by your cunningness,
so that He may not drive us out from the regions and let us not become a laughing stock.
If from today the earth has begun to be enlightened by Him

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after some time He will make the abysses too to rejoice with His brightness.
Alas! to us on account of Him because He unmasks us and troubles us,
because the earth will be able to run after Him, and whereas us it will mock."

THE REPORT FROM PERSIA AND THE SECRET DEVICES OF THE EVIL ONE

And as the forces of the adversary were terrified
another report came from Persia and it troubled them.
One demon, an expelled son of darkness, arrived in haste
wailing and perturbed, full of trembling and bad news.
He says to them: "Now I have come out from Assyria
because I saw there an unusual wonder that took place:
A great star whose light is not from the firmament Matt 2:1–12
appeared there and shined and behold, it [Assyria] was alarmed by the sign it saw.
And when the Assyrian wise men were gathered
they said that the King who will disband the oracles will appear in Judea.
And behold the Magi carry and bring their offerings to Him
and because of that I entered beforehand to see who is that one who has terrified me so much.
The ruin is great and unless we get in first and devise something against Him
then He will take control of the whole of creation and will mock at us."
The evil one says: "I am not able to approach Him
because a great power from Him terrifies me mightily.
Now let us be silent about the child because He is stronger than us;
and let us seek the time and occasion that will give opportunity for battle.
I cannot any longer keep a distance from His presence
because I (need to) look carefully at Him to see His movements and actions.

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I have no other concern, except with regard to Him;
and if I can have the opportunity and time, I will strike at Him.
Until the arrival of the Magi let us keep quiet about the affair
but once they have arrived I will arouse the sword on account of them.
I have envy and Herod has the sword.
I will give him envy and he will give his sword also.
I will murmur to him: "This child will be King,
and He will carry off your kingship from you if you will disregard Him."
I will secretly temper him with envy and I will intoxicate him — Matt 2:3,16
and I will make him to sharpen the sword against the infant.
I have wiles and means, guiles and treachery
as well as the snares of iniquity and nets of falsehood.
I will not be negligent, neither will I be silent, nor will I stay quiet
from the new born, until I have subdued Him, if I can."

THE SIDE OF THE LEFT AND THE PLOT AGAINST THE CHILD

Mary is tranquil and the infant still and Joseph is humble
but the demons are agitated because they saw the wonder that troubled them.
All the followers of the side of the left[8] were smitten
when they beheld that a birth had occurred in virginity.
The evil spirits were dismayed, agitated in their own different manners.
Demons were shattered, confused in various ways.
Satan became sad, bent downwards, as he stood with his legion

[8] 'side of the left': see note on line 59, above.

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and all his side was trembling and shaking on account of the infant.
When they looked and saw the virgin who gave milk, they wailed,
out of the wonder that was shaking them on account of the affair.
The Fruit that had come into being without marital union bewildered them,
since the womb of the mother which was sealed and preserved in virginity.
The infant laid in the manger even agitated the heavenly beings;
He is placed in the cave, yet His manifestation shakes all regions.
Error said, "As for me, I am concerned from now on about the infant
and I am planning and plotting, and I will conquer Him.
I have a dear friend who hates truth like me
the daughter of Hebrews, who loves to kill all kinds of good people. Matt 23:37
She is instructed in blood and she sets her sword against the innocent.
She is trained in deceit and is skilled in falsehood.
I am proposing to her a way because she can perform all my desires and,
as is her custom, she will encounter the child and put it to rest.
She stoned Hur[a] and through Aaron she cast the calf.[b] [a] Num 31:8 [b] Exod 32:4ff
She reviled Moses[a] and threw Jeremiah into the well.[b] [a] Exod 17:3 [b] Jer 38:6
She is more skilled than us in idolatry, which stems from her mind;
She cast the image of four faces,[9] never having learnt how to.

[9] 'image of four faces': cf. 2 Chr 33:7 (Peshitta) refers to the 'four-faced image of Manasseh; Albert, Juifs, IV 52; Bedjan III, 799, 7, 17; Ephrem, Cdiat XI 8; Ephrem, *CDiat* XI 8 ; J.-P. P. Martin, "Sur la chute des idoles," p. 112, tr. p. 133.

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Let us therefore, set in array the daughter of Jerusalem
against the child
and she will encounter Him as she knows how to, for
she is full of treachery."

THE BABE OF SWADDLING CLOTHES, THE RECONCILER AND THE LIFE-GIVER

It is a wonder to narrate how the babe was still in the
swaddling clothes;
yet the whole side of the group of the left trembled on
account of Him.
Through the road of nativity He entered creation and
caused them to wander,
so that none of the demons should know which is His
place.
Through His nativity He reconciled the earthly and
the heavenly
and He established peace between those above and
those below.
He broke down the fence of enmity between the sides Eph 2:14
and united them to praise with the same chant.
He taught (the hymn of) praise to men and to angels
so that there might be tranquillity in the height and
peace in the depth through His new birth.
The supernal beings rejoiced, the earthly exulted, cre-
ation was enlightened
by the Son who came to renew them by His nativity.
The watchers rejoice, men are glad and the demons
are sad;
evil spirits are wailing because they saw the Light that
troubled them.
Heaven praises and the earth exults and (its) extremi-
ties resound,
because the great Redeemer has shone forth to crea-
tion from Bethlehem.
The Magi are travelling with their provisions and their
gifts of honour,
likewise the shepherds with their offerings and
praises.
The watchers make joyful noise with their hosannas
and with their chants,

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and Mary is glad in her virginity as well as in her babe.
His nativity has gladdened and given joy and light to the whole of creation,
Glory to the Father who sent Him to give life to the whole world.
End of the homily on the redemptive Nativity and on the demons and Error.

310 ⴰⵎⵓⵏ ⵙⵏⵏⵎ ⵜⵜⵡⴰⵙⵙⴰⵏ ⵜⵜⵓⵙⵙⵓⵔⵉ ⴰⵎⵓⵏ ⵙⵏⵏⵎ ⵜⵜⵡⴰⵙⵙⴰⵏ ⵜⵜⵓⵙⵙⵓⵔⵉ
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III ON THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD[1]

[1] See an Italian translation of this homily by C. Vona, *Omelie Mariologiche*, pp. 249–262.

INTRODUCTION

INFORMATION ON THIS HOMILY	
Homily Title:	On the Nativity of our Lord
Source of Text:	*Homiliae selectae Mar-Jacobi Sarugensis* edited by Paul Bedjan and Sebastian Brock (2nd ed. Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2006), vol. 6, pp. 178–196.
Lines:	371

OUTLINE

Concerning the Son, who resembles his Father in his being God, none is able to speak. But his mercy made him descend. He is with us, Immanuel, in the lineage with us. Hence we are capable of telling his story and singing his praises. Since his economy is hidden, those who speak of him are troubled and those who 'investigate' him do stumble (5–56). The story of the Son is beyond customary events: the Sustainer of the world sought the borrowed milk from a young girl; the One who shook the chariots of the Cherubs is carried in arms; the Sun in the manger; the Fire girded round in swaddling clothes; the Flame sucking milk and the virgin Mary carrying the Old Child. The mystery of the Son is beyond words and discourses. One is able neither to be silent nor to speak. The one who would speak should speak of the Son with wonder and love because it is the compassion of the Father that welled upon Adam to make him return to Eden which he had lost (57–90).

All words of prophecy and all types of the hidden mystery of the virginal conception and the birth of Christ in the OT episodes have appeared openly: the stone hewn without hands, the new pitcher of Elisha, the salt thrown into the fountain by Elisha, the star of the household of Jacob, the closed door of which Ezekiel spoke, the cloud that entered into Egypt, the ass and the ox that knew the manger of its Lord, the water that issued out of the rock in the desert, the rock that issued forth rivers for the people, the one who is called 'Day-Star' in the prophecy, the staff that sprouted and issued forth from the house of Jesse, Judah who is acknowledged by his brothers, the tree that provided the ram, the well that came out in the wilderness, the light that shone out from the darkness, the Lord whom Jacob saw as standing upon the ladder, the new bread for the hungry of the earth

at Bethlehem, the town of the bread, have all become disclosed and came into effect or actualization (91–132).

The Wise One sought in the cave that serpent which had bitten Adam. He became a child in order to play with the basilisk and to mock at it. Here is the novel sight of the Flame inside the swaddling clothes to burn up the thorns of the earth. Mary grasped the Fire and the Spirit in the palms of her hands and in swaddling clothes. She is the one who tied up water in a veil, the Living Water, in her womb. The parable of Solomon has been explained and the prophecies have been fulfilled. The virgin gave birth and the Son has shone forth. Hence, the prophecy is at its limit. The Father has sent His only Son, Immanuel. There is no virgin mother except Mary (145–182).

The Bridegroom himself has come to receive the Bride. Prophets were depicting the Son who would come. Now the image has become complete with all colours and the painter ceased working. The Child regarding whom the prophecy proclaimed has accomplished his way through his Nativity and the heralds rested. The words of Isaiah have been fulfilled. The plant from the thirsty earth, Mary, not sown or planted, has sprouted. Young girl gave birth in her virginity to the Light, the great Sun of righteousness that has overthrown darkness. He is a marvel as Isaiah has called him and nothing beyond could be said, because everything regarding Him is a marvel. By the fact that the story of Immanuel is a marvel, it is beyond explanation. His way is above the words of the wise, His revelation is exalted above the senses of the learned, His nativity is above the measures of the mind and his economy runs high above the intellect (179–245).

The babe in the swaddling clothes is the creator and the sustainer. The soul that is full of faith sees him above and below. He is older and younger than his mother. He was before Adam. He is beyond and within all times as it pleases him. The Son of the Most High is among the earthly ones to set them free, Son of the Rich One is among the poor to open his treasury to those in need; the great Sun dwells among the poor to clothe them in light and brightness. The Tree of Life came from Eden to scatter his fruits upon the mortals. The sweet fruit of Mary came to sweeten the bitter peoples. The Lord of the sheep became a Lamb to be a sacrifice before his Father. The Living Fire from the essence of the Father descended taking a body. The Image of the Father, and the splendour of the divinity came in the swaddling clothes (246–299).

Joseph, together with Mary, is worthy of the Mystery. He serves the Lord of the sanctuary like a Levite, more resplendent than Aaron, while carrying the Coal of Fire in his hands unlike the Seraph (300–335).

The Son of the Creator descended and dwelt among the created and made the earth a new heaven. Hence, all rejoice in him. Eve rejoices, for the serpent has been crushed. Adam rejoices, for his heir has come to make him enter into Paradise. The pastors and their flocks rejoice, for the Lord of the flock has become a Lamb carrying off the iniquity. The betrothed virgin, the Church, rejoices and praises her Lord. The gatherings of the people and the congregations rejoice in the Son as they are gladdened abundantly on the feast day of the Son (342–371).

SUMMARY

The Supplication to Speak of the Lord's Descent on Earth (1–16)
Divine Mercy's Sending of the Son and His Mingling with the Earthly (17–38)
The Clamour on the Earth Regarding the Son (39–54)
The Hidden Economy of the Son (55–76)
Wonder and Love Speak the Story of the Son (77–90)
The Disclosure of the Hidden Mystery and the Fulfilment of the Prophecy (91–144)
The Fulfilment of the Mysteries, Parables and the Words of Prophecy (145–164)
The Prophecy at Rest and the Silent Heralds (165–182)
The Perfection of the Picture of Prophecy (183–214)
The Birth of Immanuel, the Marvel (215–232)
The Marvellous and Ineffable Way of the Son (233–245)
The Dependence of the Creation on the Child of Swaddling Clothes (246–277)
The 'Image of the Father' and 'the Splendour of the Divinity' on Earth (278–299)
Joseph, the Guardian of the Hidden Mystery (300–321)
Joseph, the Worthy One for the Mystery of the Son (322–341)
The Divine Nativity Full of Joy and Gladness (342–371)

TEXT AND TRANSLATION

THE SUPPLICATION TO SPEAK OF THE LORD'S DESCENT ON EARTH

Let my word move itself to speak about your nativity,
O Son of the Rich One who resembles His Father in His hiddenness.
About your nativity let many things be spoken through me,
O true Son who is totally light to the one who loves Him.
Concerning that being of yours, no one is able to speak;
concerning what you have become, let me speak of you, Lord, while I am wondering.
With respect to you, no one is able to speak, my Lord;
With respect to us, grant me that I may speak about you lovingly.
With regard to your being God, the discourse about you is beyond (the power of) the speakers,
but because you are human, behold, men speak about you every day.
If you had not descended to our earth we would not have been able to speak about you,
for who is succeeding to speak about you in your place that is concealed from all?
About your having come I am seeking, my Lord, to speak,
for Your compassion has made you subject to words on the road you have set.
I have not gazed above where fire dazzles from you;
in the depth I have seen you and here in our place I am speaking about you.

DIVINE MERCY'S SENDING OF THE SON AND HIS MINGLING WITH THE EARTHLY

Your love compelled you on account of us to come to our place.
About your advent grant me the discourse that is full of beauties.

B-Br 8

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Eyes have seen you and hands among the earthly have touched you
and behold the good and the bad speak about you with their tongues.
You descended from your place and because you are mingled with the earthly,[1]
the scribes saw[2] you and everyone has made homily to reach forward to you.
It has pleased you and you have come, the Ancient of Days,[3] to become a babe,
and behold, the aged in the gatherings praise you abundantly.
It pleased your Father that you should become a child and on account of that Matt 21:15
children have yearned to sing many praises to you with their hosannas.
A virgin has conceived you, and so let the company of virgins be aroused;
let them stir up praise with wonder to your Father on account of you.
Arms embraced you and behold, the babes in arms
are sealed with your name and are clothed by you spiritually.[4]

[1] Ephrem, *HNat 1:99*; 8:2.

[2] Or 'surrounded' as in the edited Syriac text; but the variant reading is preferred in the translation.

[3] Regarding the title of Christ, 'the Ancient of Days,' S. P. Brock holds that it is derived from Dan 7:13, and the application to Christ (as opposed to the Father) is made possible by a corruption in the old Greek. Early patristic writers (& hymnographers) thus use it as a title for Christ, and it must be through them that the Syriac writers (esp. from 5th century onwards) took over, cf. S. P. Brock, "The Ancinet of Days: Father or Son?" The Peshitta Dan 7:13 does not fit well for such usages. Cf. also Mic 5:2; Bedjan III 332, 11 (ET in HTM, *The True Vine* 4 (1990), 46); Aphrahat, *Dem* V 6; Ephrem, *HFid* 31:4; Cyrillona uses this attribute of Christ with respect to the 'Word' who was to become incarnate, cf. 'washing of feet,' 41–48 [cf. C. Vona, "*I Carmi di Cirillona*," *Lat2* (1963), p. 67]; R. Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom,* p. 83 (n. 2).

[4] Here the 'sealing' and 'clothing' refers to the anointing of baptism and the spiritual clothing of the 'robe of glory'; cf. Ephrem, *HNat* 1:99.

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Your love appointed for you a new mother from women
and the mothers thronged together with their husbands to give praise to your name.
From your Father the whole of your story has come close to us
and love has united you in lineage with us so that we might sing (praises) to you.
You became one of us and behold you are ours while you are our Lord
and anyone who seeks to speak of your story is entitled to do so.
Immanuel, behold, you are with us in our vicinity. Isa 7:14
Therefore, the tongues that were not worthy of you also spoke of you.

THE CLAMOUR ON THE EARTH REGARDING THE SON

If your story had been kept in silence with your Father
behold, all would have been silent and the world would have been still, without your praise.
And since Compassion sent you forth into the open and set you among the troublesome,
on account of you the earth is stirred up, has babbled, and clamoured.[5]
One magnifies you while he does not add any greatness to you.
One belittles you but littleness is not to be found in you.
One speaks about you abundantly with love
and one is moved with wonder and was silenced by your story.
One glorified himself to investigate your birth, and he became a mockery,
because he imagined that he knew, yet he was not aware that he did not know you.

[5] Ephrem, *HFid* 44:9.

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There is the 'wise person' who became puffed up with (book-) learning
so as to speak of you, my Lord, but he was driven off because he assaulted you.[6]
There is the 'ignorant' who while not knowing how to speak,
loves you and becomes greater than the 'wise' throughout his way.
There is a 'knowledge' that has ascended to see how exalted you are
but it burst, fell, and destroyed itself in the great chasm.

THE HIDDEN ECONOMY OF THE SON

Your way is exalted above doctrines and the learned,
and on account of this the scribes stumble against it when they investigate it.[7]
Your economy is hidden in its story from human beings[8]
and on account of this when someone speaks of you he is troubled.
A womb has contained you, but how can the mouth contain (you) to speak (of you),
the Word which is even higher than the world, and it is inaudible.
Knees carried you, O Valiant One, the Bearer of creation
and if someone speaks, he trembles, shakes, and becomes terrified.
On the bosom of Mary as an infant you were embraced
and too small is the mouth for the word which narrates your story.

[6] Ephrem also speaks of the destructive elements in the inquiry into divine matters; cf. *HFid* 84:2; *HVir* 31:1.

[7] Cf. Ephrem, *HRes* I:19.

[8] Lit., 'those endowed with speech.'

ﺃَﻟﻢ ﺗَﻘُﻤﻨَﺎ ﻭَﺣَﻔِﻈﻨَﺎﻙَ ﻣَﻌَﻨَﺎ ﻭَﻟَﻢ ﻧَﺮُﺩَّ ﻗُﻠُﻮﺑَﻨَﺎ ﻭَﻟَﺎ ﺗَﻨَﺤَّﻴْﺖَ ﺃَﻗْﺪَﺍﻣُﻨَﺎ ﻋَﻦْ ﺳَﺒِﻴﻠِﻚَ
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ﻭَﺍﻟﻐُﺮْﺑَﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺤَﺒْﺲِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻘَﻴْﺪِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺬُّﻝِّ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﺴْﻜَﻨَﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻔَﺎﻗَﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﺮَﺽِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺠُﺬَﺍﻡِ
ﻭَﺍﻟﺒَﺮَﺹِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺠُﻨُﻮﻥِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺰَّﻣَﺎﻧَﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺒَﻠِﻴَّﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺮَّﺩَﺍﺀَﺓِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺒَﻠَﻮَﺍﺕِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤُﺼِﻴﺒَﺎﺕِ
ﻭَﺍﻟﺮَّﺯَﺍﻳَﺎ ﻭَﺍﻟﺨَﻄَﺎﻳَﺎ ﻭَﺍﻟﺬُّﻧُﻮﺏِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﻌَﺎﺻِﻲ ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﻴِّﺌَﺎﺕِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﻜَﺎﺭِﻩِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﺴَﺎﺀِ
ﻭَﺍﻟﺼَّﺒَﺎﺡِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻠَّﻴْﻞِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻨَّﻬَﺎﺭِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﺎﻋَﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﺎﻋَﺎﺕِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻴَﻮْﻡِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻴَﻮْﻣَﻴْﻦِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺸَّﻬْﺮِ
ﻭَﺍﻟﺸَّﻬْﺮَﻳْﻦِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﻨَﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﻨَﺘَﻴْﻦِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺜَّﻼَﺙِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺜَّﻼَﺙِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﻨَﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﻨَﺘَﻴْﻦِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺸَّﻬْﺮِ
ﻭَﺍﻟﺸَّﻬْﺮَﻳْﻦِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻴَﻮْﻡِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻴَﻮْﻣَﻴْﻦِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﺎﻋَﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﺎﻋَﺎﺕِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻠَّﻴْﻞِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻨَّﻬَﺎﺭِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺼَّﺒَﺎﺡِ
ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﺴَﺎﺀِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﻜَﺎﺭِﻩِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﻴِّﺌَﺎﺕِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﻌَﺎﺻِﻲ ﻭَﺍﻟﺬُّﻧُﻮﺏِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺨَﻄَﺎﻳَﺎ ﻭَﺍﻟﺮَّﺯَﺍﻳَﺎ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤُﺼِﻴﺒَﺎﺕِ
ﻭَﺍﻟﺒَﻠَﻮَﺍﺕِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺮَّﺩَﺍﺀَﺓِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺒَﻠِﻴَّﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺰَّﻣَﺎﻧَﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺠُﻨُﻮﻥِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺒَﺮَﺹِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺠُﺬَﺍﻡِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﺮَﺽِ
ﻭَﺍﻟﻔَﻘْﺮِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻌُﺮْﻱِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﺴْﻜَﻨَﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺬُّﻝِّ ﻭَﺍﻟﻘَﻴْﺪِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺤَﺒْﺲِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻐُﺮْﺑَﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺠَﻼَﺀِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺨَﻮْﻑِ
ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﺒْﻲِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻘَﺘْﻞِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺤَﺮْﺏِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺨَﻮْﻑِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﺮَﺽِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺠُﻮﻉِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺴُّﻘْﻢِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻈَّﻤَﺄِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻌُﺮْﻱِ
ﻭَﺍﻟﻔَﻘْﺮِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﺮَﺽِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺨَﻮْﻑِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺤَﺮْﺏِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﺒْﻲِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻘَﺘْﻞِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺨَﻮْﻑِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺠَﻼَﺀِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻐُﺮْﺑَﺔِ
ﻭَﺍﻟﺤَﺒْﺲِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻘَﻴْﺪِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺬُّﻝِّ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﺴْﻜَﻨَﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻔَﺎﻗَﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﺮَﺽِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺠُﺬَﺍﻡِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺒَﺮَﺹِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺠُﻨُﻮﻥِ
ﻭَﺍﻟﺰَّﻣَﺎﻧَﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺒَﻠِﻴَّﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺮَّﺩَﺍﺀَﺓِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺒَﻠَﻮَﺍﺕِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤُﺼِﻴﺒَﺎﺕِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺮَّﺯَﺍﻳَﺎ ﻭَﺍﻟﺨَﻄَﺎﻳَﺎ ﻭَﺍﻟﺬُّﻧُﻮﺏِ
ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﻌَﺎﺻِﻲ ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﻴِّﺌَﺎﺕِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﻜَﺎﺭِﻩِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﺴَﺎﺀِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺼَّﺒَﺎﺡِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻠَّﻴْﻞِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻨَّﻬَﺎﺭِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﺎﻋَﺔِ
ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﺎﻋَﺎﺕِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻴَﻮْﻡِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻴَﻮْﻣَﻴْﻦِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺸَّﻬْﺮِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺸَّﻬْﺮَﻳْﻦِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﻨَﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﻨَﺘَﻴْﻦِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺜَّﻼَﺙِ
ﻭَﺍﻟﺜَّﻼَﺙِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﻨَﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﻨَﺘَﻴْﻦِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺸَّﻬْﺮِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺸَّﻬْﺮَﻳْﻦِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻴَﻮْﻡِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻴَﻮْﻣَﻴْﻦِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﺎﻋَﺔِ
ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﺎﻋَﺎﺕِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻠَّﻴْﻞِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻨَّﻬَﺎﺭِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺼَّﺒَﺎﺡِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﺴَﺎﺀِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﻜَﺎﺭِﻩِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﻴِّﺌَﺎﺕِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﻌَﺎﺻِﻲ
ﻭَﺍﻟﺬُّﻧُﻮﺏِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺨَﻄَﺎﻳَﺎ ﻭَﺍﻟﺮَّﺯَﺍﻳَﺎ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤُﺼِﻴﺒَﺎﺕِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺒَﻠَﻮَﺍﺕِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺮَّﺩَﺍﺀَﺓِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺒَﻠِﻴَّﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺰَّﻣَﺎﻧَﺔِ
ﻭَﺍﻟﺠُﻨُﻮﻥِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺒَﺮَﺹِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺠُﺬَﺍﻡِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﺮَﺽِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻔَﻘْﺮِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻌُﺮْﻱِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﺴْﻜَﻨَﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺬُّﻝِّ ﻭَﺍﻟﻘَﻴْﺪِ
ﻭَﺍﻟﺤَﺒْﺲِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻐُﺮْﺑَﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺠَﻼَﺀِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺨَﻮْﻑِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺤَﺮْﺏِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﺒْﻲِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻘَﺘْﻞِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺨَﻮْﻑِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺠُﻮﻉِ
ﻭَﺍﻟﺴُّﻘْﻢِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻈَّﻤَﺄِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻌُﺮْﻱِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻔَﻘْﺮِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﺮَﺽِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺨَﻮْﻑِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺤَﺮْﺏِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﺒْﻲِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻘَﺘْﻞِ
ﻭَﺍﻟﺨَﻮْﻑِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺠَﻼَﺀِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻐُﺮْﺑَﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺤَﺒْﺲِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻘَﻴْﺪِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺬُّﻝِّ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﺴْﻜَﻨَﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻔَﺎﻗَﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﺮَﺽِ
ﻭَﺍﻟﺠُﺬَﺍﻡِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺒَﺮَﺹِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺠُﻨُﻮﻥِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺰَّﻣَﺎﻧَﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺒَﻠِﻴَّﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺮَّﺩَﺍﺀَﺓِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺒَﻠَﻮَﺍﺕِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤُﺼِﻴﺒَﺎﺕِ
ﻭَﺍﻟﺮَّﺯَﺍﻳَﺎ ﻭَﺍﻟﺨَﻄَﺎﻳَﺎ ﻭَﺍﻟﺬُّﻧُﻮﺏِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﻌَﺎﺻِﻲ ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﻴِّﺌَﺎﺕِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﻜَﺎﺭِﻩِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﺴَﺎﺀِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺼَّﺒَﺎﺡِ
ﻭَﺍﻟﻠَّﻴْﻞِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻨَّﻬَﺎﺭِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﺎﻋَﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﺎﻋَﺎﺕِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻴَﻮْﻡِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻴَﻮْﻣَﻴْﻦِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺸَّﻬْﺮِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺸَّﻬْﺮَﻳْﻦِ
ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﻨَﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﻨَﺘَﻴْﻦِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺜَّﻼَﺙِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺜَّﻼَﺙِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﻨَﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﻨَﺘَﻴْﻦِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺸَّﻬْﺮِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺸَّﻬْﺮَﻳْﻦِ
ﻭَﺍﻟﻴَﻮْﻡِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻴَﻮْﻣَﻴْﻦِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﺎﻋَﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﺎﻋَﺎﺕِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻠَّﻴْﻞِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻨَّﻬَﺎﺭِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺼَّﺒَﺎﺡِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﺴَﺎﺀِ
ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﻜَﺎﺭِﻩِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﻴِّﺌَﺎﺕِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﻌَﺎﺻِﻲ ﻭَﺍﻟﺬُّﻧُﻮﺏِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺨَﻄَﺎﻳَﺎ ﻭَﺍﻟﺮَّﺯَﺍﻳَﺎ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤُﺼِﻴﺒَﺎﺕِ
ﻭَﺍﻟﺒَﻠَﻮَﺍﺕِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺮَّﺩَﺍﺀَﺓِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺒَﻠِﻴَّﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺰَّﻣَﺎﻧَﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺠُﻨُﻮﻥِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺒَﺮَﺹِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺠُﺬَﺍﻡِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﺮَﺽِ
ﻭَﺍﻟﻔَﻘْﺮِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻌُﺮْﻱِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﺴْﻜَﻨَﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺬُّﻝِّ ﻭَﺍﻟﻘَﻴْﺪِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺤَﺒْﺲِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻐُﺮْﺑَﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺠَﻼَﺀِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺨَﻮْﻑِ
ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﺒْﻲِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻘَﺘْﻞِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺤَﺮْﺏِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺨَﻮْﻑِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﺮَﺽِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺠُﻮﻉِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺴُّﻘْﻢِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻈَّﻤَﺄِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻌُﺮْﻱِ
ﻭَﺍﻟﻔَﻘْﺮِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﺮَﺽِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺨَﻮْﻑِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺤَﺮْﺏِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﺒْﻲِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻘَﺘْﻞِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺨَﻮْﻑِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺠَﻼَﺀِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻐُﺮْﺑَﺔِ
ﻭَﺍﻟﺤَﺒْﺲِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻘَﻴْﺪِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺬُّﻝِّ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﺴْﻜَﻨَﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻔَﺎﻗَﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﺮَﺽِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺠُﺬَﺍﻡِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺒَﺮَﺹِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺠُﻨُﻮﻥِ
ﻭَﺍﻟﺰَّﻣَﺎﻧَﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺒَﻠِﻴَّﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺮَّﺩَﺍﺀَﺓِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺒَﻠَﻮَﺍﺕِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤُﺼِﻴﺒَﺎﺕِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺮَّﺯَﺍﻳَﺎ ﻭَﺍﻟﺨَﻄَﺎﻳَﺎ ﻭَﺍﻟﺬُّﻧُﻮﺏِ
ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﻌَﺎﺻِﻲ ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﻴِّﺌَﺎﺕِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﻜَﺎﺭِﻩِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﺴَﺎﺀِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺼَّﺒَﺎﺡِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻠَّﻴْﻞِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻨَّﻬَﺎﺭِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﺎﻋَﺔِ
ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﺎﻋَﺎﺕِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻴَﻮْﻡِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻴَﻮْﻣَﻴْﻦِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺸَّﻬْﺮِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺸَّﻬْﺮَﻳْﻦِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﻨَﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﻨَﺘَﻴْﻦِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺜَّﻼَﺙِ
ﻭَﺍﻟﺜَّﻼَﺙِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﻨَﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﻨَﺘَﻴْﻦِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺸَّﻬْﺮِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺸَّﻬْﺮَﻳْﻦِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻴَﻮْﻡِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻴَﻮْﻣَﻴْﻦِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﺎﻋَﺔِ
ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﺎﻋَﺎﺕِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻠَّﻴْﻞِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻨَّﻬَﺎﺭِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺼَّﺒَﺎﺡِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﺴَﺎﺀِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﻜَﺎﺭِﻩِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﻴِّﺌَﺎﺕِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﻌَﺎﺻِﻲ
ﻭَﺍﻟﺬُّﻧُﻮﺏِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺨَﻄَﺎﻳَﺎ ﻭَﺍﻟﺮَّﺯَﺍﻳَﺎ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤُﺼِﻴﺒَﺎﺕِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺒَﻠَﻮَﺍﺕِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺮَّﺩَﺍﺀَﺓِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺒَﻠِﻴَّﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺰَّﻣَﺎﻧَﺔِ
ﻭَﺍﻟﺠُﻨُﻮﻥِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺒَﺮَﺹِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺠُﺬَﺍﻡِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﺮَﺽِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻔَﻘْﺮِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻌُﺮْﻱِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﺴْﻜَﻨَﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺬُّﻝِّ ﻭَﺍﻟﻘَﻴْﺪِ
ﻭَﺍﻟﺤَﺒْﺲِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻐُﺮْﺑَﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺠَﻼَﺀِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺨَﻮْﻑِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺤَﺮْﺏِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﺒْﻲِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻘَﺘْﻞِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺨَﻮْﻑِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺠُﻮﻉِ
ﻭَﺍﻟﺴُّﻘْﻢِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻈَّﻤَﺄِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻌُﺮْﻱِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻔَﻘْﺮِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﺮَﺽِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺨَﻮْﻑِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺤَﺮْﺏِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﺒْﻲِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻘَﺘْﻞِ
ﻭَﺍﻟﺨَﻮْﻑِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺠَﻼَﺀِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻐُﺮْﺑَﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺤَﺒْﺲِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻘَﻴْﺪِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺬُّﻝِّ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﺴْﻜَﻨَﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻔَﺎﻗَﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﺮَﺽِ
ﻭَﺍﻟﺠُﺬَﺍﻡِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺒَﺮَﺹِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺠُﻨُﻮﻥِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺰَّﻣَﺎﻧَﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺒَﻠِﻴَّﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺮَّﺩَﺍﺀَﺓِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺒَﻠَﻮَﺍﺕِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤُﺼِﻴﺒَﺎﺕِ
ﻭَﺍﻟﺮَّﺯَﺍﻳَﺎ ﻭَﺍﻟﺨَﻄَﺎﻳَﺎ ﻭَﺍﻟﺬُّﻧُﻮﺏِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﻌَﺎﺻِﻲ ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﻴِّﺌَﺎﺕِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﻜَﺎﺭِﻩِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﺴَﺎﺀِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺼَّﺒَﺎﺡِ
ﻭَﺍﻟﻠَّﻴْﻞِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻨَّﻬَﺎﺭِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﺎﻋَﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﺎﻋَﺎﺕِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻴَﻮْﻡِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻴَﻮْﻣَﻴْﻦِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺸَّﻬْﺮِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺸَّﻬْﺮَﻳْﻦِ
ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﻨَﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﻨَﺘَﻴْﻦِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺜَّﻼَﺙِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺜَّﻼَﺙِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﻨَﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﻨَﺘَﻴْﻦِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺸَّﻬْﺮِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺸَّﻬْﺮَﻳْﻦِ
ﻭَﺍﻟﻴَﻮْﻡِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻴَﻮْﻣَﻴْﻦِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﺎﻋَﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﺎﻋَﺎﺕِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻠَّﻴْﻞِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻨَّﻬَﺎﺭِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺼَّﺒَﺎﺡِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﺴَﺎﺀِ
ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﻜَﺎﺭِﻩِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﻴِّﺌَﺎﺕِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﻌَﺎﺻِﻲ ﻭَﺍﻟﺬُّﻧُﻮﺏِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺨَﻄَﺎﻳَﺎ ﻭَﺍﻟﺮَّﺯَﺍﻳَﺎ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤُﺼِﻴﺒَﺎﺕِ
ﻭَﺍﻟﺒَﻠَﻮَﺍﺕِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺮَّﺩَﺍﺀَﺓِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺒَﻠِﻴَّﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺰَّﻣَﺎﻧَﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺠُﻨُﻮﻥِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺒَﺮَﺹِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺠُﺬَﺍﻡِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﺮَﺽِ
ﻭَﺍﻟﻔَﻘْﺮِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻌُﺮْﻱِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﺴْﻜَﻨَﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺬُّﻝِّ ﻭَﺍﻟﻘَﻴْﺪِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺤَﺒْﺲِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻐُﺮْﺑَﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺠَﻼَﺀِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺨَﻮْﻑِ
ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﺒْﻲِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻘَﺘْﻞِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺤَﺮْﺏِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺨَﻮْﻑِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﺮَﺽِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺠُﻮﻉِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺴُّﻘْﻢِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻈَّﻤَﺄِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻌُﺮْﻱِ
ﻭَﺍﻟﻔَﻘْﺮِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﺮَﺽِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺨَﻮْﻑِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺤَﺮْﺏِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﺒْﻲِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻘَﺘْﻞِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺨَﻮْﻑِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺠَﻼَﺀِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻐُﺮْﺑَﺔِ
ﻭَﺍﻟﺤَﺒْﺲِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻘَﻴْﺪِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺬُّﻝِّ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﺴْﻜَﻨَﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻔَﺎﻗَﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﺮَﺽِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺠُﺬَﺍﻡِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺒَﺮَﺹِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺠُﻨُﻮﻥِ
ﻭَﺍﻟﺰَّﻣَﺎﻧَﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺒَﻠِﻴَّﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺮَّﺩَﺍﺀَﺓِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺒَﻠَﻮَﺍﺕِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤُﺼِﻴﺒَﺎﺕِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺮَّﺯَﺍﻳَﺎ ﻭَﺍﻟﺨَﻄَﺎﻳَﺎ ﻭَﺍﻟﺬُّﻧُﻮﺏِ
ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﻌَﺎﺻِﻲ ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﻴِّﺌَﺎﺕِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﻜَﺎﺭِﻩِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﺴَﺎﺀِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺼَّﺒَﺎﺡِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻠَّﻴْﻞِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻨَّﻬَﺎﺭِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﺎﻋَﺔِ
ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﺎﻋَﺎﺕِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻴَﻮْﻡِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻴَﻮْﻣَﻴْﻦِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺸَّﻬْﺮِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺸَّﻬْﺮَﻳْﻦِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﻨَﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﻨَﺘَﻴْﻦِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺜَّﻼَﺙِ
ﻭَﺍﻟﺜَّﻼَﺙِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﻨَﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﻨَﺘَﻴْﻦِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺸَّﻬْﺮِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺸَّﻬْﺮَﻳْﻦِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻴَﻮْﻡِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻴَﻮْﻣَﻴْﻦِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﺎﻋَﺔِ
ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﺎﻋَﺎﺕِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻠَّﻴْﻞِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻨَّﻬَﺎﺭِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺼَّﺒَﺎﺡِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﺴَﺎﺀِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﻜَﺎﺭِﻩِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﻴِّﺌَﺎﺕِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﻌَﺎﺻِﻲ
ﻭَﺍﻟﺬُّﻧُﻮﺏِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺨَﻄَﺎﻳَﺎ ﻭَﺍﻟﺮَّﺯَﺍﻳَﺎ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤُﺼِﻴﺒَﺎﺕِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺒَﻠَﻮَﺍﺕِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺮَّﺩَﺍﺀَﺓِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺒَﻠِﻴَّﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺰَّﻣَﺎﻧَﺔِ
ﻭَﺍﻟﺠُﻨُﻮﻥِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺒَﺮَﺹِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺠُﺬَﺍﻡِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﺮَﺽِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻔَﻘْﺮِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻌُﺮْﻱِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﺴْﻜَﻨَﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺬُّﻝِّ ﻭَﺍﻟﻘَﻴْﺪِ
ﻭَﺍﻟﺤَﺒْﺲِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻐُﺮْﺑَﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺠَﻼَﺀِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺨَﻮْﻑِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺤَﺮْﺏِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﺒْﻲِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻘَﺘْﻞِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺨَﻮْﻑِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺠُﻮﻉِ
ﻭَﺍﻟﺴُّﻘْﻢِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻈَّﻤَﺄِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻌُﺮْﻱِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻔَﻘْﺮِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﺮَﺽِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺨَﻮْﻑِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺤَﺮْﺏِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺴَّﺒْﻲِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻘَﺘْﻞِ
ﻭَﺍﻟﺨَﻮْﻑِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺠَﻼَﺀِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻐُﺮْﺑَﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺤَﺒْﺲِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻘَﻴْﺪِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺬُّﻝِّ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﺴْﻜَﻨَﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻔَﺎﻗَﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﻤَﺮَﺽِ
ﻭَﺍﻟﺠُﺬَﺍﻡِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺒَﺮَﺹِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺠُﻨُﻮﻥِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺰَّﻣَﺎﻧَﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺒَﻠِﻴَّﺔِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺮَّﺩَﺍﺀَﺓِ ﻭَﺍﻟﺒَ

A young girl gave you, the Sustainer,[9] borrowed milk
and with your right hand that stretched out the heavens, you were grasping the breast.
Arms have carried you while that chariot of the Cherubs — Ezek l:4ff
was shaken as a result of you as it stirs up your praise with blessings.
Everything of yours when spoken of is exalted,
beyond what is customary and what belongs to nature; so who is
capable of (understanding) you?
The Sun is in the manger and the Fire girded round in swaddling clothes;
A virgin who gives birth and a mother who remains without marital union.
A new sight—where the Flame sucks the milk
and the virgin Mary carried the Aged Child.
The field that gives a heap of corn and a pile without any sower,
a young girl who remains in the state of birth-giving without any partner.

WONDER AND LOVE SPEAK THE STORY OF THE SON

Amidst all these the scribe[10] swims as though in a sea
and he will not succeed either to be silent or to speak.
Not even silence can suffice for the Son of God,
nor by voices, or discourses, or words it is easy for Him to be contained.
Then how should the person who would speak, speak about him?

[9] The Son is the Sustainer of the whole creation; cf. Bedjan IV, 552–3 (Hom. 125).

[10] Or 'the learned.'

ﻣﺤﺒﺘﻬﺎ ﻟﻠﻤﺴﻴﺢ ﻛﻤﺎ ﺫﻛﺮﻧﺎ: 65
ﻭﺍﻟﺘﻲ ﺑﺴﺒﺒﻬﺎ ﺗﺮﻙ ﺍﻟﻤﻠﻚ ﺃﺑﺎﻫﺎ ﻭﺃﻣﻬﺎ ﻭﺑﻴﺘﻬﺎ ﻭﺃﺗﻰ ﺇﻟﻰ ﻫﺬﻩ ﺍﻟﺒﻼﺩ ﻭﺗﺰﻭﺟﻬﺎ ﻫﻨﺎﻙ ﻭﺻﺎﺭﺕ ﻣﻠﻜﺔ ﻭﻫﻲ ﺍﻟﺘﻲ ﺑﻨﺖ ﻫﺬﺍ ﺍﻟﺒﺮﺝ ﻭﺳﻤﻴﺖ ﺑﺮﺝ ﺍﻟﺰﺟﺎﺝ ﻷﻧﻬﺎ ﺃﻭﻝ ﻣﻦ ﺑﻨﺎﻩ ﻭﺃﻭﻝ ﻣﻦ ﺳﻜﻨﻪ ﻭﻛﺎﻥ ﻗﺒﻞ ﺫﻟﻚ ﻳﺴﻤﻰ ﺑﺮﺝ ﺍﻟﻐﺮﺍﺏ ﻟﺨﺮﺍﺏ ﻣﻦ ﻛﺎﻥ ﻓﻴﻪ ﻭﻗﻴﻞ ﺇﻧﻪ ﻛﺎﻥ ﻟﻠﻐﺮﺍﺏ ﻓﻴﻪ ﻭﻛﺮ ﻭﻓﺮﺥ ﻭﻛﺎﻥ

Or if he should be silent how can his soul contain the wonder?[11]
Too small is the mouth to speak of the story of the Son of God;
likewise the tongue, to move its utterances towards the hearers.
With wonder and love one should speak of the story of the Son of God,
for, it is also with love that he moved from His place to become an infant.
The compassion of the Father, that is with Him eternally,[12]
welled up over Adam[13] so that he should return to Eden which he had lost.
And the Father sent His Word to the womb of the virgin
and it went out with the revelation that is full of wonder to the world.

THE DISCLOSURE OF THE HIDDEN MYSTERY AND THE FULFILMENT OF THE PROPHECY

All the words of prophecy have come into effect[14]
and the Hidden Mystery has appeared openly to show itself.
We have seen that stone which was hewn without the hands, — Dan 2:34, 44–45[15]
which is Christ who came to the birth without marital union.

[11] Here it is relevant to note Ephrem's views on praising. According to him 'praise' is a babe in the womb: If the babe is held back in the womb both the mother and the babe would die. Hence let the speech hold out faith in praise, cf. Ephrem, *HFid* 20:2.

[12] Cf. Rilliet, *Turgome*, I 8; Bedjan III, 423, 3–8.

[13] Cf. *Nat* I, lines 117–20.

[14] Cf. Albert, *Juifs*, I, 271–348; IV, 177–242; Bedjan III, 305, 11–320, 21.

[15] Christ, 'the Stone': cf. Aphrahat, *Dem* I 2–9; Ephrem, *CDiat* II 3; XXI 21; R. Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom,* pp. 205–212.

ﺃﻩ ﻱ ﺗﻌﺎﻟﻰ ﺃﻣﺮ ﻫﻔﻌﻞ ﺍﻟﻤﻮﺍﻓﻖ ﻟﻠﻌﻘﻞ۞
ﻭﻛﻮﻥ ﻫﻮ ﻓﻌﻞ ﺍﻟﻤﻄﻠﻖ ﻋﻨﺪﻩ ﻭﻋﻦ ﺍﻟﻜﻞ:
ﺃﻭ ﺍﻟﻌﻘﻞ ﻭﺍﻟﺮﻭﺡ ﻣﻌﺎً ﻭﻫﻮ ﺍﻟﻤﻘﺎﺑﻞ۞
ﺍﻟﻤﻮﺍﻓﻖ ﻟﻠﻌﻘﻞ ﻓﻌﻨﺪﻩ ﻭﻋﻦ ﺍﻟﻜﻞ: 85
ﻭﻫﻮ ﺍﻟﻤﺘﺼﻞ ﺑﻪ ﻓﻲ ﺍﻟﺬﻫﻦ ﺧﻠﻘﺎ۞
ﻭﺍﻟﻤﺴﻤﻰ ﻭﺍﺣﺪ ﻭﻫﻮ ﺍﻟﻤﺴﻤﻰ ﺍﻟﻤﺸﻬﻮﺭ ﺑﻪ:
ﻛﻤﺎ ﻗﺎﻝ ﺃﻫﻞ ﺍﻟﻨﻈﺮ ﻫﻮ ﻭﺍﻟﺠﻮﻫﺮ ﻫﻮ۞
ﻭﻫﻮ ﺃﻳﻀﺎ ﺍﻟﻤﺤﺮﻙ ﺍﻟﻤﻨﻔﻌﻞ ﻭﺍﻟﻤﻜﻤﻞ: 90
ﻭﻫﻮ ﺍﻟﻤﺤﺮﻙ ﺍﻷﻭﻝ ﻟﻠﻜﻞ ﻭﺍﻟﻌﻠﺔ۞
ﻭﻫﻮ ﺍﻟﻤﺤﺮﻙ ﻟﻠﻨﻔﻮﺱ ﺑﺎﻟﺸﻮﻕ ﻭﻟﻠﺘﺤﺮﻳﻚ:
ﻭﻫﻮ ﺍﻟﻤﺤﺮﻙ ﻟﻠﻌﻘﻮﻝ ﺑﺎﻟﺘﻌﻘﻞ ﻭﻟﻠﺘﻤﻴﻴﺰ۞

The new pitcher of Elisha has been explained to us — 2 Kgs 2:20
because it is the young virgin girl in a symbol that sets the earth in order.
Also that salt which was cast into the fountain — 2 Kgs2:21
is the Son of God who has imparted taste to our insipid state.
And as it was said that a Star shall shine forth from the house of Jacob; — Num 24:17
behold, the Heir has stood up to become the head of the peoples of the earth. — Mic 5:2
That closed door of which Ezekiel has spoken — Ezek 44:2
is the virgin whose virginal seal is preserved.
Mary is the comely cloud that entered into Egypt — Isa 19:1
who carried the Lord in her arms to visit the place.
The ass and the ox which, as it is written, 'knew the manger of its Lord,' — Isa 1:3
behold, the world has seen its Lord in the manger in the swaddling clothes.
The dew that Gideon found in the bowl when he prayed — Judg 6:37–40
depicted the symbol of him who came down upon the fleece like rain.
The water that issued from the rock in the desert, — Exod 17:6; Num 20:11; 1 Cor 10:4
is the good news that became the drink for (all) peoples and places
The rock that gave birth to rivers for the great people — Dan 2:34
is Christ who supplied life to the dead world.
The man of whom it is written that his name is "sunrise" in the prophecy[16] — Mal 4:2
is the Son of God who is the Sun of righteousness.
The Staff and the Shoot that sprouted and issued forth from the house of Jesse — Isa 11:1
is our Hope, who has also been called Nazarene. — Matt 2:23
Judah, of whom it is written that all his brothers would acknowledge him, — Gen 49:10

[16] Or 'Day-Star'; cf. Zech 6:12 (Peshitta).

95 أَنَّ عَلِيًّا رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ أَمَرَ امْرَأَةً أَنْ تَجْلِسَ عَلَى طَرِيقِ الْحَجِّ وَمَعَهَا قَارُورَةُ زَيْتٍ وَقَارُورَةُ خَلٍّ فَمَرَّ بِهَا رَكْبٌ فَاشْتَرَى مِنْهَا خَلًّا فَلَمَّا أَرَادَ أَنْ يَدْفَعَ الثَّمَنَ قَالَ لَهَا لَا تَأْخُذِي مِنْهُمْ ثَمَنًا حَتَّى تَأْتِيَ بِزَيْتٍ فَإِنَّهُمْ أَصْحَابُ عَلِيٍّ وَلَا يَأْكُلُونَ إِلَّا الزَّيْتَ وَلَا يَأْتَدِمُونَ بِالْخَلِّ

100 وَعَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّ رَجُلًا أَتَى النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ إِنَّ امْرَأَتِي وَلَدَتْ غُلَامًا أَسْوَدَ وَإِنِّي أَنْكَرْتُهُ فَقَالَ لَهُ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ هَلْ لَكَ مِنْ إِبِلٍ قَالَ نَعَمْ قَالَ فَمَا أَلْوَانُهَا قَالَ حُمْرٌ قَالَ هَلْ فِيهَا مِنْ أَوْرَقَ قَالَ إِنَّ فِيهَا لَوُرْقًا قَالَ فَأَنَّى أَتَاهَا ذَلِكَ قَالَ عَسَى أَنْ يَكُونَ نَزَعَهُ عِرْقٌ فَقَالَ لَهُ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَهَذَا عَسَى أَنْ يَكُونَ نَزَعَهُ عِرْقٌ

105 وَعَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّ رَجُلًا أَتَى النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ إِنَّ امْرَأَتِي وَلَدَتْ غُلَامًا أَسْوَدَ وَإِنِّي أَنْكَرْتُهُ فَقَالَ لَهُ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ هَلْ لَكَ مِنْ إِبِلٍ قَالَ نَعَمْ قَالَ فَمَا أَلْوَانُهَا قَالَ حُمْرٌ قَالَ هَلْ فِيهَا مِنْ أَوْرَقَ قَالَ إِنَّ فِيهَا لَوُرْقًا قَالَ فَأَنَّى أَتَاهَا ذَلِكَ قَالَ عَسَى أَنْ يَكُونَ نَزَعَهُ عِرْقٌ

110 وَعَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّ رَجُلًا أَتَى النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ إِنَّ امْرَأَتِي وَلَدَتْ غُلَامًا أَسْوَدَ وَإِنِّي أَنْكَرْتُهُ فَقَالَ لَهُ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ هَلْ لَكَ مِنْ إِبِلٍ قَالَ نَعَمْ قَالَ فَمَا أَلْوَانُهَا قَالَ حُمْرٌ قَالَ هَلْ فِيهَا مِنْ أَوْرَقَ قَالَ إِنَّ فِيهَا لَوُرْقًا قَالَ فَأَنَّى أَتَاهَا ذَلِكَ قَالَ عَسَى أَنْ يَكُونَ نَزَعَهُ عِرْقٌ

115 وَعَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّ رَجُلًا أَتَى النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ إِنَّ امْرَأَتِي وَلَدَتْ غُلَامًا أَسْوَدَ وَإِنِّي أَنْكَرْتُهُ فَقَالَ لَهُ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ هَلْ لَكَ مِنْ إِبِلٍ قَالَ نَعَمْ قَالَ فَمَا أَلْوَانُهَا قَالَ حُمْرٌ قَالَ هَلْ فِيهَا مِنْ أَوْرَقَ قَالَ إِنَّ فِيهَا لَوُرْقًا قَالَ فَأَنَّى أَتَاهَا ذَلِكَ قَالَ عَسَى أَنْ يَكُونَ نَزَعَهُ عِرْقٌ

behold, from his tribe has shone forth the Redeemer to the whole world.
That tree[17] which provided the ram on the mountain of Isaac — Gen 22:13
is the young girl who conceived the fruit in her womb without marital union.
The Well that came out in the wilderness for the world and it [world] drank — Num 21:16
is the infant in whom the thirst of the peoples has been quenched.
The Light which, it is said, shall shine out from the darkness, — 2 Cor 4:6; Matt 4:16
behold, from the people the Sun for the peoples has shone forth, and they are illumined by Him.
The Lord whom Jacob saw as standing upon the ladder — Gen 28:12[18]
has descended Himself to the earth, and on account of this He was standing above it.[19]
The name of Ephrathah had been called 'house of bread'[20] — Mic 5:2; Matt 2:6
because the Bread of life descended from the height and dwelt in its abode.
Behold, Bethlehem, the new bread, for the hungry of the earth,
the nourishment in the manger for the peoples who have gone astray like animals. — Isa 53:6; 1 Pet 2:24–25
The town of the bread which gave the Bread, corresponding to its name,
for peoples and generations will eat from it, without it ever failing.
A cave hewn out became a home for that One who descended himself,
is so that He might empty out the cave-tombs of their dead.

[17] *Nat* I, line 643.
[18] Albert, *Juifs*, I 201.
[19] Rilliet, *Turgome*, I 20; VI 10; Albert, Juifs, IV, 179–82.
[20] 'Bethlehem' derives from *bayta d-laḥma* (the House of Bread).

ﻭﺍ ﻓﻲ ﻋﻠﻰ ﻭﺑﺴ ﻗﻮﻩ ﺍﻟﺤﻤﺪ ﻟﻠﻪ ❊
ﻫﻮ ﺃﻟﻬﻨﺎ ﻭﺑﻴﺪﻩ ﻭﺍ ﺃﺣﻨﺎ ﺣﻜﻤﻪ ﻭﺍﻟﻌﻠﻢ:
ﺍﻟﺤﻤﺪ ﻟﻠﻪ ﻭﺍﻟﺬﻱ ﻗﺎﻟﻮﺍ ﺣﻨﻔﻪ ﻭﻟﺎ ﺃﻗﻮﻟﻪ ❊ 120
ﺩﻧﺎ ﻭﻓﻠﻖ ﻓﻲ ﻛﻪ ﺃﺣﻨﺎ ﺍﻟﺤﻤﺪ ﻟﻠﻪ ﺍﻟﻌﻠﻢ:
ﻫﻮﺓ ﺑﻠﻨﺎ ﻭﺭﻭﻟﺎ ﻭﺑﻘﻠﻨﺎ ﻣﻪ ﺍﻟﻘﻲ ❊
ﻟﻪ ﻭﺍﻗﻨﺎ ﻭﻓﻲ ﺷﻔﻠﺎ ﻧﻪﻭﺍ ﺗﺒﺲ:
ﻭﺍ ﻓﻲ ﺑﻠﺎ ﻓﻤﻠﺎ ﺍﻟﺒﻘﻠﻨﺎ ﻭﺱ ﻫﻪﻭ ﻣﻪ ❊
ﻫﻨﺎ ﻭﺳﻠﻪ ﺑﻘﻔﻠﻨﺎ ﻭﻟﻢ ﺑﻼ ﻫﺘﻠﻨﺎ: 125
ﺱﻠ ﻛﻪ ﻟﻠﻮﻟﺎ ﻫﻘﻜﻠﻨﺎ ﻣﻨﻪ ﻟﻢ ﻣﻪ ❊
ﻓﻔﻪ ﻭﻗﻨﺎﻟﺎ ﺑﻠﻨﺎ ﻭﻛﻠﻨﺎ ﺍﻟﻘﻠﻢ ﻫﻨﺎ:
ﻭﻛﻠﻨﺎ ﻭﺘﺘﺎ ﺱﻠ ﻓﻲ ﻗﻠﻨﺎ ﻫﺎ ﺑﻨﻪ ❊
ﻭﺍ ﻣﻠ ﻣﻨﻢ ﻛﻠﻨﺎ ﺗﻠﺎ ﻣﻘﺘﻨﻪ ﻗﻮﻟﻨﺎ:
ﺃﻟﻄﺎ ﺑﻪﻭﻨﺎ ﻣﻘﻔﻨﺎ ﻗﻠﻪ ﺃﻟ ﺘﺘﺎ ❊ 130
ﻓﻪﻭﻠ ﻛﻠﻨﺎ ﻭﻠﻪﻣ ﻛﻠﻨﺎ ﺃﻟ ﻓﻨﻨﻪ:
ﻗﻠﻜﻪ ﻓﺘﻪ ﻣﻘﻔﻨﺎ ﻟﻘﻪ ﻟﺎ ﻫﻪﻗﺎ ❊
ﻫﻨﺎﺎ ﻟﻔﻨﺎ ﻗﻠﻨﺎ ﻫﻪ ﻟﺎﺎﺳﻠﻪ:
ﻗﻔﻔﻪ ﻭﺎ ﻫﻨﺎ ﻭﻫﻨﺎ ﻓﻲ ﻟﻠﻨﻪﻫ ❊ 185

It was in a hollow cave that the Lord of heaven dwelt,
He whom the heaven does not contain if He dwells there.
The serpent who had dust as its bread had bitten Adam, Gen 3:14
but the Wise One entered, sought him in the caves and in the caverns:
He had seen its tracks (leading) into the ear of Eve,[21] and He entered from there;
He despoiled its path and went out chasing after it to capture it in its own place.
He became an infant so that He might play with the Basilisk; Isa 11:8
and stretch out His hand in the hole of the Asp and mock at it.
Into the shrines (of idols) of the earth He entered following (after) it while seeking it.
He seized it at the Nativity and crushed it, the great serpent, in death.

THE FULFILMENT OF THE MYSTERIES, PARABLES AND THE WORDS OF PROPHECY

The cave became an abode for Him so that He might dwell in it, Ps 71:17
He is the Aged Child whose name was before the sun.
The palaces of the kings and their citadels became things of ignominy
but through the redemption the manger shone forth upon the whole earth.
Behold, castles are empty and desolate, without redemption,
but the cave became full of hope and life for the whole world.
A novel sight with the Flame[a] inside the swaddling clothes[b] [a] Isa 10:17 [b] Luke 2:7

[21] Ear of Eve > < Ear of Mary: by the hearing of Eve was the fall (cf. Gen 3:1–6) and by the hearing of Mary is salvation (cf. Luke 1:26–3 8). Eve-Mary contrast in the salvation history is a prominent catechetical theme in Syriac theology.

ⵜⵉⵎⵣⵉⵔⵜ ⵏ ⵜⵙⵙⴰⵡⵉⵜ ⵜⴰⵎⵓ

that had come to burn up the thorns of the earth from all quarters. Gen 3:18
Who is the one who grasped the wind in his cupped hands unless here, Prov 30:4
for Fire and Spirit are grasped in the palms of hands and in swaddling clothes?[22]
Who has tied up water in a veil, unless Mary Prov 30:4
who in her virginity, conceived the child who is wholly a marvel? Isa 9:6
The young virgin carried the Living Water in the womb, John 4:10; 7:18
and it became a wonder that had never happened in the world, apart from it.
O King Solomon, come, see that your parable has been explained by Him,
and sing praise to the Lord of your father, if you can.
The wind has been grasped in the palms and in the fingers
and without violence the waters were bound up within the veil. Prov 30:4
The mysteries and the parables and all the words of prophecy have been fulfilled;
O object of prophecy, seal the law.[23]

THE PROPHECY AT REST AND THE SILENT HERALDS

Portray the testimony; do not prophesy, O seer,
because prophecy has reached its limit in the Son who has shone forth.
The virgin gave birth and fulfilled everything that had been written, Isa 7:14
and anyone who again wants to prophesy sets division.
Only one woman gave birth to the One and there is no other virgin mother;

[22] The Syriac insistence on the agency of the Holy Spirit in the Incarnation and in the sacraments are reflected here. For further elucidation, cf. Ephrem, *HFid* 10:17; 4:2.

[23] Albert, *Juifs*, I, 287.

ﻭﻻ ﺗﺤﺴﺒﻦ ﺍﻟﻠﻪ ﻏﺎﻓﻼ ﻋﻤﺎ ﻳﻌﻤﻞ ﺍﻟﻈﺎﻟﻤﻮﻥ ﺇﻧﻤﺎ
ﻳﺆﺧﺮﻫﻢ ﻟﻴﻮﻡ ﺗﺸﺨﺺ ﻓﻴﻪ ﺍﻷﺑﺼﺎﺭ ﻣﻬﻄﻌﻴﻦ
186 ﻣﻘﻨﻌﻲ ﺭﺅﻭﺳﻬﻢ ﻻ ﻳﺮﺗﺪ ﺇﻟﻴﻬﻢ ﻃﺮﻓﻬﻢ ﻭﺃﻓﺌﺪﺗﻬﻢ
155 ﻫﻮﺍﺀ ﻭﻛﺬﺑﻮﺍ ﺍﻟﺮﺳﻞ ﻓﺠﺎﺀ ﺻﻴﺤﺔ ﻓﺈﺫﺍ ﻫﻢ
ﻗﻴﺎﻡ ﻳﻨﻈﺮﻭﻥ ﻳﺰﻓﻮﻥ ﻣﻬﻄﻌﻴﻦ ﺭﺅﻭﺳﻬﻢ ﻻ
ﻳﺮﺗﺪ ﺇﻟﻴﻬﻢ ﻃﺮﻓﻬﻢ ﻭﺃﻓﺌﺪﺗﻬﻢ ﻫﻮﺍﺀ ﻭﻻ
ﺗﺤﺴﺒﻦ ﺍﻟﻠﻪ ﻏﺎﻓﻼ ﻋﻤﺎ ﻳﻌﻤﻞ ﺍﻟﻈﺎﻟﻤﻮﻥ ﺇﻧﻤﺎ
160 ﻳﺆﺧﺮﻫﻢ ﻟﻴﻮﻡ ﺗﺸﺨﺺ ﻓﻴﻪ ﺍﻷﺑﺼﺎﺭ ﻣﻬﻄﻌﻴﻦ
ﻣﻘﻨﻌﻲ ﺭﺅﻭﺳﻬﻢ ﻻ ﻳﺮﺗﺪ ﺇﻟﻴﻬﻢ ﻃﺮﻓﻬﻢ ﻭﺃﻓﺌﺪﺗﻬﻢ
ﻫﻮﺍﺀ ﻭﺃﻧﺬﺭ ﺍﻟﻨﺎﺱ ﻳﻮﻡ ﻳﺄﺗﻴﻬﻢ ﺍﻟﻌﺬﺍﺏ ﻓﻴﻘﻮﻝ
ﺍﻟﺬﻳﻦ ﻇﻠﻤﻮﺍ ﺭﺑﻨﺎ ﺃﺧﺮﻧﺎ ﺇﻟﻰ ﺃﺟﻞ ﻗﺮﻳﺐ ﻧﺠﺐ
165 ﺩﻋﻮﺗﻚ ﻭﻧﺘﺒﻊ ﺍﻟﺮﺳﻞ ﺃﻭﻟﻢ ﺗﻜﻮﻧﻮﺍ ﺃﻗﺴﻤﺘﻢ
ﻣﻦ ﻗﺒﻞ ﻣﺎ ﻟﻜﻢ ﻣﻦ ﺯﻭﺍﻝ ﻭﺳﻜﻨﺘﻢ ﻓﻲ ﻣﺴﺎﻛﻦ
ﺍﻟﺬﻳﻦ ﻇﻠﻤﻮﺍ ﺃﻧﻔﺴﻬﻢ ﻭﺗﺒﻴﻦ ﻟﻜﻢ ﻛﻴﻒ ﻓﻌﻠﻨﺎ ﺑﻬﻢ
ﻭﺿﺮﺑﻨﺎ ﻟﻜﻢ ﺍﻷﻣﺜﺎﻝ ﻭﻗﺪ ﻣﻜﺮﻭﺍ ﻣﻜﺮﻫﻢ ﻭﻋﻨﺪ

there is also no other Only-Begotten but our Lord.
O Jew,[24] whom are you looking for to come to the earth?
for, none other will come again because there is none; keep yourself silent.
The Father had a single (Son) and He sent Him as He promised,
and behold, Immanuel is with us and He is the Only-Begotten.
The oil of prophecy ran out, because it had carried out its course,
and because it [prophecy] saw that the Son had come, behold, it is silent.
That resonance of the prophets and that of the heralds became silent because the King has come
and He caused the voices that were premature to come to an end.
The Bridegroom himself entered and received the bride, the daughter of lights;
and prophecy will not resound again concerning the good tidings.
Behold, a virgin conceives and gives birth, said Isaiah Isa 7:14
and because she has given birth, the story of prophecy is completed.

THE PERFECTION OF THE PICTURE OF PROPHECY

When the picture had taken on completion with all its colours,
the painter who perfected the image ceased to work and would not labour any more.
The prophets depicted the Son who would come and behold, He has come,
and all the utterances of prophecy have rested from (telling of) his story.
That silence of the prophets who do not prophesy gives testimony

[24] Lit., 'son of the people.'

ﻭﻣﺎ ﻟﻪ ﻣﻦ ﺃﻭﻟﻴﺎﺀ ﻣﻦ ﺩﻭﻥ ﺍﻟﻠﻪ ﻭﻟﻮ ﺍﻓﺘﺪﻯ ﺑﻪ ﺃﻭﻟﺌﻚ ﻟﻬﻢ ﻋﺬﺍﺏ ﺃﻟﻴﻢ ﻳﻮﻡ ﺗﺒﻴﺾ ﻭﺟﻮﻩ ﻭﺗﺴﻮﺩ ﻭﺟﻮﻩ ﻓﺄﻣﺎ ﺍﻟﺬﻳﻦ ﺍﺳﻮﺩﺕ ﻭﺟﻮﻫﻬﻢ ﺃﻛﻔﺮﺗﻢ ﺑﻌﺪ ﺇﻳﻤﺎﻧﻜﻢ ﻓﺬﻭﻗﻮﺍ ﺍﻟﻌﺬﺍﺏ ﺑﻤﺎ ﻛﻨﺘﻢ ﺗﻜﻔﺮﻭﻥ ﻭﺃﻣﺎ ﺍﻟﺬﻳﻦ ﺍﺑﻴﻀﺖ ﻭﺟﻮﻫﻬﻢ ﻓﻔﻲ ﺭﺣﻤﺔ ﺍﻟﻠﻪ ﻫﻢ ﻓﻴﻬﺎ ﺧﺎﻟﺪﻭﻥ ﺗﻠﻚ ﺁﻳﺎﺕ ﺍﻟﻠﻪ ﻧﺘﻠﻮﻫﺎ ﻋﻠﻴﻚ ﺑﺎﻟﺤﻖ ﻭﻣﺎ ﺍﻟﻠﻪ ﻳﺮﻳﺪ ﻇﻠﻤﺎ ﻟﻠﻌﺎﻟﻤﻴﻦ ﻭﻟﻠﻪ ﻣﺎ ﻓﻲ ﺍﻟﺴﻤﺎﻭﺍﺕ ﻭﻣﺎ ﻓﻲ ﺍﻷﺭﺽ ﻭﺇﻟﻰ ﺍﻟﻠﻪ ﺗﺮﺟﻊ ﺍﻷﻣﻮﺭ ﻛﻨﺘﻢ ﺧﻴﺮ ﺃﻣﺔ ﺃﺧﺮﺟﺖ ﻟﻠﻨﺎﺱ ﺗﺄﻣﺮﻭﻥ ﺑﺎﻟﻤﻌﺮﻭﻑ ﻭﺗﻨﻬﻮﻥ ﻋﻦ ﺍﻟﻤﻨﻜﺮ ﻭﺗﺆﻣﻨﻮﻥ ﺑﺎﻟﻠﻪ ﻭﻟﻮ ﺁﻣﻦ ﺃﻫﻞ ﺍﻟﻜﺘﺎﺏ ﻟﻜﺎﻥ ﺧﻴﺮﺍ ﻟﻬﻢ ﻣﻨﻬﻢ ﺍﻟﻤﺆﻣﻨﻮﻥ ﻭﺃﻛﺜﺮﻫﻢ ﺍﻟﻔﺎﺳﻘﻮﻥ ﻟﻦ ﻳﻀﺮﻭﻛﻢ ﺇﻻ ﺃﺫﻯ ﻭﺇﻥ ﻳﻘﺎﺗﻠﻮﻛﻢ ﻳﻮﻟﻮﻛﻢ ﺍﻷﺩﺑﺎﺭ ﺛﻢ ﻻ ﻳﻨﺼﺮﻭﻥ ﺿﺮﺑﺖ ﻋﻠﻴﻬﻢ ﺍﻟﺬﻟﺔ ﺃﻳﻦ ﻣﺎ ﺛﻘﻔﻮﺍ ﺇﻻ ﺑﺤﺒﻞ ﻣﻦ ﺍﻟﻠﻪ ﻭﺣﺒﻞ ﻣﻦ ﺍﻟﻨﺎﺱ ﻭﺑﺎﺀﻭ ﺑﻐﻀﺐ ﻣﻦ ﺍﻟﻠﻪ ﻭﺿﺮﺑﺖ ﻋﻠﻴﻬﻢ ﺍﻟﻤﺴﻜﻨﺔ ﺫﻟﻚ ﺑﺄﻧﻬﻢ ﻛﺎﻧﻮﺍ ﻳﻜﻔﺮﻭﻥ ﺑﺂﻳﺎﺕ ﺍﻟﻠﻪ ﻭﻳﻘﺘﻠﻮﻥ ﺍﻷﻧﺒﻴﺎﺀ ﺑﻐﻴﺮ ﺣﻖ ﺫﻟﻚ ﺑﻤﺎ ﻋﺼﻮﺍ ﻭﻛﺎﻧﻮﺍ ﻳﻌﺘﺪﻭﻥ

that the Father has no other Son to come to earth.
Till He came the horns of prophecy called out
but once He has come, behold, silence is extended over the heralds.[25]
The voice of the interpreter did not depart until He came
and if it is not He, then let him who interprets speak (again).
Where are the priests who depicted Him with their vestments — Exod 28:8–12[26]
or the seers who spoke about Him in their own various ways?
Why is the whole clamour of prophecy rendered out of service
by the tidings that have been heard about the infant?
This is the child who had been proclaimed in prophecy,
who through His nativity accomplished His way and the heralds rested.
Come, Isaiah, see the Immanuel in the cave,
and seal up the story because the truth has stood firm in your prophecy.
A plant has shot up from that thirsty earth, Mary, — Isa 53:2[27]
which was not sown or planted, just as you proclaimed in your prophecy. — Isa 11:1
Behold the wonder, arise, and marvel with many people,
because in the same body are the signs of virginity and milk belonging to her who is full of wonder.
A virgin is His mother, on account of this His name is 'Wonder,' — Isa 9:6
before whom (human) nature and the utterance of all human beings[28] are powerless.

[25] Cf. Ephrem, *CHaer* 25:4.
[26] The stone on the breast-plate of the priestly garment is a depiction of Christ.
[27] Ephrem, *HNat* 11:4; *HRes* 1:3.
[28] Lit., 'endowed with speech.'

ⵜⵉⵏⵉ ⵉⵙⵙⵏⵉ ⵍⵍⴰ ⵢⵉⵎ ⵍⵍⵉⵖ ⵡⵏⵉⵏ ⵍⵍⴰⵡⵉⵏⴰ
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ⵜⵜⵜ ⵜⵜⵜⵓⵙⵉⵖ ⵡⵙⵙⵓⵍⵍⵓⵎ ⵅⵍⵅⵙⵙⵉⵍⵜ ⵏⵜⵜⵓⵙⵉⵖ ⵙⵎⵎⵓ ⵏⵏⵉⵏ
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ⵡⵍⵍ ⵔⵔⵓⵙ ⵙⵙⵉⵔⵔⵎ ⵍⵍⵉⵙ ⵡⵍⵍⵎⵎⵓⵍⵍⴰⵎⵎⵓ ⵅⵅⵙⵙⵉⵏⵜⵍⵍⴰⵎⵎⵓ
ⵙⵓ ⵡⵙⵙⵓⵅⵓⵎⵎⵓ ⵅⵎⵎ ⵅⵅⵙⵙⵉⵜⵍⵍⴰ:
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The young girl who gave birth in her virginity struck dumb the scribe
and his word was powerless for any interpretation or any explanation.
The wise failed as well as his prolonged discourses
because wherever one sees the signs of virginity and birth, it is too hard to speak.
The great Sun of righteousness gathered in His rays
and a single young girl carried Him in her womb in a holy manner. Mal 4:2
She gave birth to the Light whom all the luminaries fear,
because through His birth He has overthrown darkness from all regions. Matt 4:16

THE BIRTH OF IMMANUEL, THE MARVEL

The offspring that shone forth cannot be spoken of clearly;
Or let him who would explain it speak: Let us see if you can.
O scribe, man who is instructed, manifest all your wisdom,
and make a homily on the Infant if you are able.
Come shadow, come and see the Sun if He will allow you,
and depict to us His beauty and tell us about His splendour.
Where have you ever seen a virgin mother and a child? Isa 9:6
Remember Isaiah who without inquiry called Him a 'Marvel.'
Who is the virgin who gives milk unless Mary?
O discerning one, call out, 'Marvel' and do not go on (further).
You are not wiser than Isaiah, son of the Hebrews,
for he, while prophesying, called Him Immanuel, a 'Marvel.'
He saw the virgin standing in the rank of birth-giving mothers
and he wondered about her Son and with rectitude called Him a 'Marvel.'

ܟܟܡܗ ܟܡܐܘܗ ܠܟܠ ܒܟܠ ܟܡܐ ܟܠ ܒܟܠ ܟܡܐ ܟܠ ܒܟܠ ܟܡܐ

For it is a marvel to have a child without marital union,
again, for a woman to give birth without a partner is a marvel.
Again it is a marvel that God also should become man
and that the Mighty One of the generations should come to birth and to growth.

THE MARVELLOUS AND INEFFABLE WAY OF THE SON

The story of Immanuel does not require any explanation
for, if it could be explained it would not be a marvel, as it was called.
All his story is esteemed worthy of wonder and marvel
for, the prophet too, while wondering about Him, called Him a 'Marvel.'
If you seek an offspring by a virgin in her virginity,
like Isaiah, call it a 'Marvel' and do not venture any further.
(Human) nature is too weak because the way of the Son of God is exalted
and by (human) nature it is inexplicable and not subject to any explanation.
Also, had not Isaiah called it a marvel beforehand?[29]
His way is spread out above the words of all wise men.
His revelation is exalted above the senses of all Scribes.[30]
His nativity is set above the measure of all minds;
the whole of His economy runs high above the intellect.

[29] This couplet remains incomplete in the edited text of P. Bedjan.
[30] Or 'the learned.'

ﻭَﻣُﺰَّا ﻫِﻮ ﻛِﻤ ﺗَﻮﺩَا ﺧَﻮﻟَﺎ ﻭُﻟَﺎ ﻭَﻣُﻮﻟِﺎ:
ﻭَﻣُﺰَّا ﻫِﻮ ﺃَﻣﺪ ﺃَﺎﻛِﺐ ﺃَﻴﻠَﺎﺍ ﻭُﻟَﺎ ﻋَﻤﺎُﻟَﻪ۞ 230
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ﻭَﻛِﻴﺤُ ﺤُﺤﺸَﺎ ﺋَﻠﺎَّﺍ ﺣَﺤﺒِﺍ ﻩَﺤﻠَّﻮﺿَﻠﺍَ۞
ﻛَﻪ ﻗَﻤﻤُﻠَﺎ ﺣُﺪَﺍ ﻋَﺰﻩَﻪ ﻭﻛَﻌَﺌَﻪﺃَﻠﻠ:
ﻭَﺍ ﻫَﻠﻌَﻌَﻤ ﻛَﻪ ﻭَﻣُﺰَّا ﻫِﻮ ﺃَﻣ ﻭَﺍﻠﺎَّﺪَ۞
ﺤَﻠَّﻮﻭَﺍ ﻋُﺪَﺍ ﻩَﺤﺒَﻮﻣُﺰَّا ﻗَﻜَﻪ ﻋَﺰﻩَﻪ: 235
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ﻭُ ﻛَﺤﻠَّﻮﺤَﻠَﺍ ﺍَﻠﺎَﺪَ ﺗَﺤﺒِﺍ ﺗَﺤﻠَّﻮﻛَﻮﺃَﻪ:
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ﻫُﺌَﺍ ﻣُﺍَﺪ ﻭُﻣُﻠَﺍ ﻫِﻪ ﺃَﻭﻣَﻪ ﻭَﺰ ﻛَﻜُﻪَﺍ: 190
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ﺤَﻠَّﻪ ﻫَﻪ ﻫَﺤﻠَﺍ ﻭَﻠَﻪ ﻫَﻨَﻨَﻠَﺍ ﻫَﻤَﻪُﻠَﺍ ﺃَﻣﻪَﻪ:
ﺤَﻠَّﻪ ﻫَﻪ ﺀَﻨَﻠَﺍ ﻭَﻠَﻪ ﻫَﻠَﻪ ﻭَﻣ ﻛَﻠَّﻪَ۞
ﺤَﻠَّﻪ ﻫَﻪ ﻫَﻤَﻤَﻪﻠَﺍ ﻭَﻠَﻪ ﻫَﻪَﻪ ﻫَﻤﻤ ﻫَﻤَﻪُﻪ:
ﺤَﻠَّﻪ ﻫَﻪ ﻫَﻪﻠَﺍ ﻭُﻣُﻠَﺍ ﻫُﻠَﻪ ﻫَﻪﺤُﻨَﻪﻠَﻪ۞ 245

THE DEPENDENCE OF THE CREATION ON THE CHILD OF SWADDLING CLOTHES

O wise man, come, see the babe in the swaddling clothes,
recognize in Him how the whole creation depends on His bidding.
Again wonder at Him, while placed in the manger in Ephrathah
He was governing the sea and the land together with His Father.
While a young woman gives Him milk as to an infant
He was giving dew and rain for the seeds of the earth.
If you have a soul that is full of faith,
let your mind take flight and see that He is totally above and below.
Look upon Him who sits upon the chariot of the heavenly beings — Ezek 1:26
while a young girl carries Him in her arms, yet He is one and the same.
For behold, the company of Gabriel bow down before Him with their faces bent downwards to the ground
while the household members of Joseph carry Him in their arms.
Seraphs pour out (chants of) 'Holy, holy, holy' before Him with their mouths
while human beings carry Him and sing lullabies to Him with their tongues.
Heaven is too small and it does not contain Him if He dwells in it
but spacious enough is the bosom of Mary for Him to be carried about in it.
This is the Child who fashioned His mother in the womb of her mother
yet He was fashioned physically and became born from her.
He produced milk and set breasts in the pure body
and again He sucked from the tender milk that He made.

ⵓ ⵙⵎⵎⴰⵔ ⵉⵏⵓ ⵖⵓⵍⵍⴰ ⵔⵔⴰⵖ ⵅⵣⵣⴰⵡⵉ:
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He fashioned His mother in the image of His Father
when He created her
and finally He came and was formed in her and became born from her.
Yesterday He made her and today He came to birth
from her,
for He is older as well as younger than His mother,
and it is uninvestigable.
He, the Only-Begotten, was before Adam and after
Mary.
He is beyond all times and within all times because it
pleased Him.
The son of the barren woman also announced thus
while he was proclaiming,
"There comes the One after me and He is before me
because He is prior to me." John 1:30
The infant is a marvel because His name had been
before the sun Isa 9:6; Ps 71:17
and the Lord said to me, "Today I have begotten
you." Ps 2:7; Acts 13:33; Heb 1:5; 5:5
Yesterday and today He is Jesus, Son of God, Heb 13:8
the One without beginning who wished to become
subject to a beginning.

'THE IMAGE OF THE FATHER' AND 'THE SPLENDOUR OF THE DIVINITY' ON EARTH

The infant that lay down in the small manger among
the poor,
while the fiery ranks with their legions tremble before
Him.
The infant who grasps the breast and sucks milk from
it,
yet the (created) natures beseech from Him that He
may give their sustenance.
The Son of the Most High who came to be among the
earthly ones,
on account of them, to set them free by His Nativity.
The Son of the Rich One who wished to dwell among
the poor,

ﺍﻟﻤﻠﻚ ﺍﻟﻤﺘﻮﺍﺿﻊ ﻟﻠﻌﺒﺎﺩ ﻓﻲ ﺍﻟﺪﻧﻴﺎ:
ﻭﺍﻟﻤﺘﻜﺒﺮ ﻋﻠﻰ ﺍﻟﻌﺒﺎﺩ ﻓﻲ ﺍﻟﺪﻧﻴﺎ ﻭﺍﻟﺨﺴﺎﺭ ﻓﻲ ﺍﻟﻌﻘﺒﻰ.
ﻭﺍﻟﻤﺘﻜﺒﺮ ﻋﻠﻰ ﺍﻟﻌﺒﺎﺩ ﻓﻲ ﺍﻟﺪﻧﻴﺎ ﻭﺍﻟﺨﺴﺎﺭ ﻓﻲ ﺍﻟﻌﻘﺒﻰ:
ﻭﺍﻟﻤﺘﻜﺒﺮ ﻋﻠﻰ ﺍﻟﻌﺒﺎﺩ ﻓﻲ ﺍﻟﺪﻧﻴﺎ ﻭﺍﻟﺨﺴﺎﺭ ﻓﻲ ﺍﻟﻌﻘﺒﻰ.

and He opened His treasury and showered His riches upon those in need.
The Great Sun who furnished His dwelling among the poor
and with His flashes He clothed them in light and brightness.
The Tree of life[31] that stirred from the exalted place of Eden
and behold, in the cave He scatters His fruits upon mortals.
The Sweet Fruit that Mary gave birth to in her virginity
which men, who had become bitter, ate and became sweetened through it.
The virgin gave to the world the Sweet Bunch of Grapes — Isa 65:8–9[32]
whose drink comforted the peoples of the earth, who were mourning.
The Lord of the sheep who became a lamb among His flock,
and behold, they carry Him to be a sacrifice before His Father.
The Living Fire from the essence of the Father has descended:
taking a body, and in the likeness of man, It went out into the world.
The Image of the Father and the magnificent splendour of the divinity,
behold, in the cave, is girded round in the swaddling clothes of poverty.

[31] Adam was barred from reaching 'the Tree of Life.' But divine mercy sent down that 'Tree of Life' to Adam/humanity in the captivity.

[32] R. Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom*, p. 113 ff.

ⵜⵉⵎⵣⵡⵓⵔⵜ ⵏ ⵜⵉⵎⵓⵔⵜ ⵏ ⵜⵉⵙⵙⵉⵏ

JOSEPH, THE GUARDIAN OF THE HIDDEN MYSTERY

O Joseph, come, show to us the Father of the Child
since you are treated wrongly because of Him and the truth calls out that you are not His father.
Mary is virgin and between her and the Child, who are you looking for?
Let not the Son of the Most High be dishonoured by your paternity.
Joseph said, "I do not approach to dishonour
but to guard the destitute woman from abuse.
It is a novel matter that a babe should come into being without marital union
and no one believes that Mary, the young girl, is a virgin.
And if I put myself far away from the Child whose Father is hidden,
Mary would die as an adulteress though she did not commit adultery.
That is why I approached, so that I may hold back from her all gossip
until the Child wants it and His Father would reveal His story.
As long as He is silent the mystery is guarded from the outsiders
and I am guarding Him as my son, the Hidden Mystery.[33]
Words fall silent and the priests filled with wickedness fail
from the abuse of the child and of its mother as long as He wishes.
But when it pleases Him to reveal himself to the world whose son He is
that woman will remain as mine and Mary will shine in her virginity.

[33] Cf. Bedjan III 329, 1–2; "Why Our Lord Abode upon the Earth for Thirty Years," ET in HTM, *The True Vine* 4 (1990), p. 43, line 151–2.

ﻭﻗﺎﻝ ﻟﻬﻢ ﻳﺎ ﻗﻮﻡ ﻫﺬﻩ ﺍﻟﻤﺪﻳﻨﺔ ﻗﺪ ﺃﺧﺬﺕ ﻣﻨﻲ ﻭﻗﺪ ﺃﺧﺬﺕ ﻣﻨﻜﻢ ﻭﻟﻢ ﻳﺒﻖ ﻟﻲ ﻭﻟﻜﻢ ﺷﻲﺀ ﻓﺎﺭﺟﻌﻮﺍ ﺑﻨﺎ ﻋﻨﻬﺎ ﻟﻌﻞ ﺍﻟﻠﻪ ﻳﺮﺯﻗﻨﺎ ﻏﻴﺮﻫﺎ ﻓﻘﺎﻟﻮﺍ ﻟﻪ ﻧﺤﻦ ﻻ ﻧﺮﺟﻊ ﻋﻨﻬﺎ ﺃﺑﺪﺍ ﻓﺎﻧﺼﺮﻑ ﻋﻨﻬﻢ ﻭﺳﺎﺭ ﺣﺘﻰ ﻧﺰﻝ ﺑﺎﻟﻤﺪﻳﻨﺔ ﻓﺎﺳﺘﻮﻟﻰ ﻋﻠﻴﻬﺎ ﻭﻗﺘﻞ ﻣﻠﻜﻬﺎ ﻭﺳﺒﻰ ﻧﺴﺎﺋﻬﺎ ﻭﺃﻭﻻﺩﻫﺎ ﻭﺃﺧﺬ ﺃﻣﻮﺍﻟﻬﺎ ﻭﺃﻗﺎﻡ ﺑﻬﺎ ﻭﺑﻨﻰ ﻓﻴﻬﺎ ﻭﺳﻜﻨﻬﺎ ﻭﺳﻤﻴﺖ ﺑﻤﺪﻳﻨﺔ ﺍﻟﻤﻠﻮﻙ ﻭﻫﻲ ﺗﺴﻤﻰ ﺇﻟﻰ ﺍﻟﻴﻮﻡ ﻣﺪﻳﻨﺔ ﺍﻟﻤﻠﻮﻙ ﻭﻫﻲ ﺑﺎﻟﻘﺮﺏ ﻣﻦ ﺍﻟﻤﺪﻳﻨﺔ ﺍﻟﺘﻲ ﻛﺎﻥ ﻓﻴﻬﺎ ﺍﻟﻤﻠﻚ ﺍﻟﺬﻱ ﻗﺘﻠﻪ ﺍﻟﻤﻠﻚ ﺍﻟﻤﻨﺼﻮﺭ

Behold, I am approaching and am serving while being fearful
and when it pleases Him He will set me away without abuse.
She was betrothed to me and now I have left behind the betrothal
and I have become a servant to the mother who is totally holy."

JOSEPH, THE WORTHY ONE FOR THE MYSTERY OF THE SON

O Mary, who is He, and whose Son is the Sweet Fruit,
for behold, you carry Him while your dignity is exalted in your virginity?
O Virgin, who became a mother through a wonder, come, point out to us,
why Joseph, the Just, is treated unjustly for you, since he does not know you (carnally)?
Your Son is the Exalted One and His Father is hidden, and you are holy;
For let Joseph go off so that you will not be reviled by the earthly.
The pure woman speaks, "I am not afraid of abuse
My Son knows that I am a virgin, because no man has known me (carnally).
I will not drive out Joseph who is full of holiness
because like a Levite, behold, he serves the Lord of the sanctuary.
Aaron, the priest was not made more resplendent than Joseph
for, behold, in his hands he carries the Lord of the sanctuary and escorts Him.
That Coal of Fire, which the Seraph scarcely took hold of with the tongs of fire, Isa 6:6
behold, Joseph carries with his fingers.
As long as the infant desires, Joseph will remain beside Him.
He serves Him with holiness for he is a just man.
I am not ungrateful to his discernment or his modesty,

ⵀⴰ ⵓⵏⵜ ⵉⵏⵏⴰ ⴰⵎⵎⴰⵔ ⵉⵏⵏⴰ ⵔ ⵖⵙⵍ ⵉⵏⵏⴰ:
ⴰⵎⴰ ⵖⵎⵔ ⵜⴰ ⵎⵣⵣⴰⵏ ⵀⴰ ⴽⵜ ⵄⵍⵍ ⵥⵎⵙⵍⵖ⁙
ⵀⵎⵎⵓⵏ ⵜⵄⵔⴰ ⴽⵜ ⴰⵀⴰⵎ ⵀⵎⵍⵀⴰ ⵅⵎⵎⵓⵣⴰⵍ: 320
ⵔⴰⵎⴰⵙ ⵅⵉⵏ ⵍⵍⴰⵎ ⵖⵅⵍⵔⴰⵖ ⵔⵎⵎⴰⵙⵖ⁙
ⴰ ⵜⵎ ⵎⵣⵣⴰⵏ ⵎⴰⵏ ⴰⵔ ⵖⵍⵍⵓ ⵙⵎⵎⵓⵔ:
ⵓⴰ ⵍⵎⵙⵓ ⵏⵏⴰⵔ ⵜⵎ ⵔ ⵓⵔ ⵣⵎⵎⵔ ⵅⵎⵓⵅⵜⵎ⁙
ⵅⵓⵎⵍⵍⴰ ⵓⴰⴰⵓ ⵉⵎⴰ ⵅⵓⴰⵓⵍ ⵙ ⵔⵖⵎ ⵅ:
ⵅⵎⵓⵍ ⵍⵅⵎ ⵅⵎ ⵣⵎⵎⵔ ⵛⵍⵓ ⴰⵍⵍ ⵓⵖⵎ ⵅⵎ⁙ 325 194
ⵅⵖⵎ ⵅⵓⵍⵍⴰ ⵓⴰ ⵔⵏⵏⴰⵔ ⵛⵎⵓⵍⴰ ⵔⵏⵏⴰ ⵔⵏⵏ:
ⵓⵏⵏⵍ ⵣⵎⵎⵔ ⵍⴰ ⵉⵏⵍⵍⵅⵎ ⵛⵍⵓⵜⵓⵍⵍⴰ⁙
ⵉⵎⵣⴰ ⵓⵛⵍⴰ ⵍⴰ ⵓⵍⵍⴰ ⵉⵏⴰ ⵀⵅ ⵥⵙⵍⴰ:
ⵓⵖⵔⵔⵍ ⵣⵎⵎⵔ ⵓⵅⵓⵍⵍⴰ ⵉⵏⴰ ⵓⵍⵍ ⵉⵎⵣⵀⵀⵍ⁙
ⵍⴰ ⵍⵓⵣⵓⴰ ⵉⵏⴰ ⵅⵔⵎⵀⵀ ⵓⵍⵍⴰ ⵔⵖⵎⵓⵍⴰ: 330
ⵓⵎⵔ ⵅⵓⵍⴰ ⵓⴰ ⵔⵎⵎⵀⵀ ⵅⵎ ⵅⵎⵣⴰ ⵖⵜⵓⵀⵍⴰ⁙
ⵍⴰ ⵉⵔⵓⵔⵔ ⵉⵔⵥⵎ ⵙⵓⴰⵍ ⵍⵅ ⵀⵀ ⵣⵎⵎⵔ:
ⵓⴰ ⵍⵍⵅ ⵙⵜⵓⵔⵔⵎⵎ ⵅⵎⵣⴰ ⵖⵜⵓⵀⵍⴰ ⵔⵎⵔⵙⵙ ⵅⵎ⁙
ⵀⵎⵍⵍⵓⵏⴰⵉ ⵓⵜⵓⴰ ⵓⵎ ⵓⵀⵜⵜⴰ ⵀⵎⵅⵅⵍ ⵜⵜⵓⴰ:
ⵅⵎⵙⵎⵀⵀ ⵍⵍⵓⵙⵓ ⵓⴰ ⵍⵍⵅ ⵣⵎⵎⵔ ⵅⵍ ⵔⵅⵓⵍⵍⴰ⁙ 335
ⵀⵍⵍ ⵓⵅⵜⴰ ⵓⵍⵍ ⵖⵜⵜⴰ ⵅⵓⵍⴰ ⵣⵎⵎⵔ:
ⵀⵎⵎⵀⵀ ⵓⴰ ⵅⵎⵜⵜⴰⵏⵉ ⵓⵅⵅⵍⴰ ⵛⵍⵓⴰ ⵜⵜⴰ ⵓⵜⵜⴰ⁙
ⵍⴰ ⵍⵅⵍⴰ ⵉⵏⴰ ⵅⵎⵓⵜⵀⵀⴰ ⵔⵅⵅⵎⵎⵀⵀⴰ:

for, the Lord wished to reveal through him the mystery of His Son before him.
For, if Joseph had not been worthy of the mystery
he would not have become the betrothed to His mother and then stayed with her."

THE DIVINE NATIVITY FULL OF JOY AND GLADNESS

Let Joseph rejoice because he became the foster father on the earth
for the Son of the Most High with whose glory the heaven is filled.
Let the virgin rejoice because she became the mother in her virginity
to that Fashioner who adorned Eve and gave her to Adam. Gen 2:22
Let creation be glad because the Son of the creator has descended and dwelt in it
and He has made the earth a new heaven by His birth.
Let the cave-tombs and all their crevices and the depths of the earth rejoice
because the Lord of heaven has come and dwelt in a cave.
Let the babes rejoice because the Fashioner of babes has become a companion for them
and He has crawled with the babes in the streets on account of Adam.
Let the whole rank of women in travail rejoice in you, my Lord
for you are the joy of the heart both to the babes and to their parents.
And let the young women clap the palms (of the hand) to praise
because the Lord of time has chosen a young woman, to be (born) from her.
Let the aged rejoice because the Ancient of the days[34] has shone forth from Mary,

[34] See the note given to *FH III 23*. Cf. also *FH V17; X 68*.

ﻭﻫﺬﺍ ﺭﺟﻞ ﻣﻦ ﺍﻟﻌﻠﻤﺎﺀ ﺍﻟﻌﺎﻣﻠﻴﻦ ﺍﻟﺰﻫﺎﺩ ❊
ﻛﺎﻥ ﻟﻪ ﺟﻨﺎﻥ ﻳﺨﺪﻣﻪ ﻭﻳﺄﺗﻴﻪ ﺑﺎﻟﻄﻌﺎﻡ: 340
ﻓﻼ ﻳﺰﺍﻝ ﻳﺄﺗﻴﻪ ﺑﺎﻟﻄﻌﺎﻡ ﻓﻲ ﻫﺬﺍ ﻭﻗﺖ ❊
ﻭﻗﺪ ﺍﺳﺘﺒﻄﺄ ﺍﻟﻄﻌﺎﻡ ﻓﻠﻢ ﻳﺄﺗﻪ ﺑﻪ:
ﻓﺨﺮﺝ ﻓﻲ ﻃﻠﺒﻪ ﻓﻤﺮ ﺑﺒﻴﺖ ﺭﺟﻞ ﻣﻦ ﺍﻟﻌﺒﺎﺩ ❊
ﻓﺴﻠﻢ ﻋﻠﻴﻪ ﻭﺳﺄﻟﻪ ﻋﻦ ﺣﺎﻟﻪ ﻓﺄﺧﺒﺮﻩ ﺑﺎﻟﺤﺎﻝ:
ﻓﻘﺎﻝ ﻟﻪ ﺍﻟﺮﺟﻞ ﻣﺎ ﺃﺭﺍﻙ ﺇﻻ ﻣﻬﻤﻮﻣﺎ ❊ 345
ﻓﻘﺎﻝ ﻟﻪ ﺍﻟﺠﻨﻲ ﻭﻣﺎ ﺷﺄﻧﻲ ﻻ ﺃﺟﺪ ﻃﻌﺎﻣﺎ: 195
ﻓﻘﺎﻝ ﻟﻪ ﺍﻟﺮﺟﻞ ﻓﻤﺎ ﺳﺒﺐ ﺫﻟﻚ ❊
ﻓﻘﺎﻝ ﻟﻪ ﺍﻟﺠﻨﻲ ﺇﻧﻲ ﻛﻨﺖ ﺃﺧﺪﻣﻪ ﻭﻳﺄﺗﻴﻪ ﺑﺎﻟﻄﻌﺎﻡ:
ﻓﺴﺄﻟﻪ ﻋﻦ ﺳﺒﺐ ﺫﻟﻚ ﻓﻘﺎﻝ ﻟﻪ ﺇﻧﻲ ﻣﺮﺭﺕ ﺑﻬﺬﺍ ﺍﻟﻤﻮﺿﻊ ❊
ﻓﺴﻤﻌﺖ ﺻﻮﺕ ﺍﻟﻤﻐﻨﻲ ﻓﻤﺎ ﺳﻤﻌﺖ ﺃﺣﺴﻦ ﻣﻦ ﺻﻮﺗﻪ ﻗﻂ: 350
ﻓﺴﻤﻊ ﺍﻟﻐﻨﺎﺀ ﻭﺃﻋﺠﺒﻪ ﻓﻤﺎ ﺯﺍﻝ ﻳﺴﻤﻊ ﻣﻨﻪ ❊
ﻓﻠﻢ ﻳﺸﻌﺮ ﺑﻨﻔﺴﻪ ﺇﻻ ﻭﻫﻮ ﻗﺪ ﺩﺧﻞ ﺍﻟﺒﻴﺖ:
ﻭﺭﺃﻯ ﺷﻴﺨﺎ ﻗﺪ ﺍﺳﺘﻠﻘﺎﻩ ﺍﻟﻤﻠﻚ ﻭﺍﻟﻤﻮﺕ ❊
ﻓﻘﺎﻡ ﺇﻟﻴﻪ ﻓﺴﻠﻢ ﻋﻠﻴﻪ ﻭﺳﺄﻟﻪ ﻋﻦ ﺣﺎﻟﻪ: 355
ﻓﺴﻤﻊ ﺻﻮﺗﺎ ﻭﻋﻈﺎ ﻭﺯﻫﺪﺍ ﻭﺭﺃﻯ ﺷﻴﺨﺎ ﻗﺪ ﺍﺳﺘﻠﻘﺎﻩ ﺍﻟﻤﻮﺕ:

and became the staff to sustain them because they were weak.
Let Eve, whom the great serpent had smitten in Eden, rejoice, Gen 3:1
because the Son of her daughter has stood up and crushed the Asp that had mocked her.
Let Adam, the head of the race and the generations, rejoice
because the Heir has shone forth, who shall make him enter into Paradise.
Today let the pastors and their flocks rejoice
because the Lord of the flock has become for us a lamb to carry off our iniquity. Lev 16:21–22
Let the virgin Church who is betrothed to you rejoice in you, my Lord,
when she sings to you new praise with an exalted voice.
Let the gatherings of the peoples and congregations[35] rejoice in you
because on your feast day, behold, they are gladdened in you abundantly.
Let the insignificant mouth that sing praises to you rejoice in you
and the tongue too which, though unworthy, sang your praise.
Let the speaker and the hearers too rejoice in you, my Lord
because by your Nativity you have gladdened them; to you be glory.

[35] See note to line 23 above; cf. also Bedjan I , 448 (Hom. 18, on Palm Sunday, line 68; ET in MHMJS 3); V, 448 (Hom. 165, on the Presentation, line 17; ET in MHMJS 7).

ⵙⴰⵔⵉⵖ ⵏⵜⵜⴰ ⵜⵉⵏⵎⵔⵔⵓⵜ ⵏ ⵜⵎⵓⵔⵜ ⵜⵉⵏⵎⵔⵔⵓⵜ ⵙⴰⵔⵉⵖ
ⵜⵉⵎⵙⵉⵍⵜ ⵏⵜⵜⴰ ⵜⵉⵏⵎⵔⵔⵓⵜ ⵜⵉⵎⵙⵉⵍⵜ

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